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JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

THE

AMATEUR OF FENCING;

OR A

TREATISE

ON THE

ART OF SWORD-DEFENCE.

Price eight Shillings.

THE

Amateur of Fencing;

OR A

TREATISE

ON THE

ART OF SWORD-DEFENCE,

THEORETICALLY AND EXPERIMENTALLY

EXPLAINED UPON NEW PRINCIPLES;

DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR PERSONS WHO HAVE ONLY ACQUIRED A SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT.

By JOSEPH ROLAND,
Fencing Master of the Royal Military Academy, at Woolwich.

"I'll be your Foil, Laertes; in mine Ignorance
"Your Skill shall like a Star i' th' darkest Night appear."

SHAKSPEARE.

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1809.

DEDICATION.

TO MY SCHOLARS.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

ALTHOUGH the custom of dedicating is becoming out of fashion, I cannot, merely on that account, let this favourable opportunity pass without addressing to you a few words in that form.

I am well aware that I might, had I judged it proper, have obtained permission from several persons of the first distinction to dedicate this undertaking to them; but as most of you were, by your kind suggestions, instrumental to my publishing it, I thought you would consider it more consistent in me not to select any one in particular for the purpose of shewing this mark of my respect.

Your approbation of me, and the great confidence you have been pleased to place in me, as your Fencing Master, are sufficiently evident, by your continued recommendations, which I have the vanity to consider as a convincing proof that my method of teaching is duly appreciated, and particularly as it has gained me the signal honour of being appointed Fencing Master of the first Royal Military Academy in Europe; for most of you know that, previously to my obtaining this situation, I offered, though I had been well recommended, to display my abilities publicly against any of the profession who might choose to accept the invitation.

I have also the pleasing reflection of having every reason to believe that none of you have ever left me on purpose to take another Fencing Master, although I have frequently requested, and always wished you

to see and to try other persons, in order that you should be *convinced* of being taught at least as well as their scholars. Some of you, who had had no other instructions before you came to me, have accordingly taken a lesson or two from various Masters, by way of *trial*, and you were perfectly satisfied that there was no *charlatanrie* in my way of acting; for assuredly there cannot be a more certain and fair method for your improvement than by appreciating different Masters' abilities.

Under these considerations, I hope I shall not be looked upon as vain in having the pride and satisfaction of perceiving that I have, at all times, depended upon my *abilities alone*; consequently, I flatter myself you will not deem it taking too great a liberty in my offering the present Work to your kind protection, which, if it meets with any success, I shall be wholly in-

debted to you for it; and although I fear I may be considered by some as an egotist, I sincerely hope you are perfectly sensible that my ardent desire and sole study is for your improvement.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

With the greatest respect and gratitude,

Your most obedient, and

Obliged humble Servant,

JOSEPH ROLAND.

Royal Military Academy,
August, 1809.

PREFACE.

THAT there are persons of mistaken ideas in almost every Art or Science, is what few will deny. Yet I am inclined to believe there are more erroneous opinions entertained with regard to the *Art of using the Sword*, than on most other subjects.

This circumstance arises chiefly, I conceive, from the scarcity of masters, in this country especially, who are properly qualified to teach the Art, rather than, as some persons imagine, from its being considered in itself as of little or no importance. Be that, however, as it may, certain it is that many absurd and weak arguments are entertained on the subject, even by persons in other respects of good understanding.

With this view, as well as by the earnest wish of the generality of my scholars, I have been in-

duced to draw up this little Treatise on the *Art of Fencing*, in order to point out and to correct some of those prevailing errors and obstructions, as well as the prejudices (in consequence of having been improperly taught) which have been the means of retarding the progress of its admirers, so that its chief utility and merit may be more generally estimated and comprehended.

There are, indeed, some books on this subject, but I have never found that the authors of them have attained their proposed end—that of informing and instructing their readers. Their performances are, for the most part, mere copies of each other; and besides being embarrassed with a variety of absurd and unnatural positions, the explanations and reasonings upon the different parades, feints, &c. are, upon the whole, so very inconsistent and ill-digested, as to render them totally unfit for the purpose intended.

The motive, therefore, of this little work is, to give the young practitioner (who is expected to be already acquainted with the simple positions, and most of the terms used in fencing) a general, clear, and familiar idea of the *chief principles* of the *Science* of using the Sword, in order to serve as a better foundation for enabling him to

acquire both the theory and practice with greater ease, expedition, and effect, than can be done by the perusal of most other publications on the subject; and admitting also that the pupil is under a good master, he must frequently be *detained* some time upon a single motion, which requires a long explanation, by which means the *practical* part of the lesson is necessarily much shortened.

This circumstance, therefore, will be, it is hoped, in some degree remedied by the scholars, previously to taking their lessons, perusing the present work with attention, so that when they are with their master they will execute the different movements without much intermission, the teacher having, in general, little more to do, that is, for *beginners of two or three months lessons*, than to prevent them from falling into, and contracting false positions, and now and then to demonstrate and to convince them clearly, in a very few words, of the propriety and *intentions* of the different motions; for in reality, the Art of Fencing consists in the knowledge of but very few movements, and not, as many imagine, in a *great number* of parades and thrusts.

These simple motions and positions of the body

are, by a person of good sense, and by moderate application, soon acquired, being founded on the natural motions of the limbs; but the true *Art* of Sword-defence depends, in a great measure, on *judgement* in *deceiving* the adversary's motions, and in not being deceived by his. The want of understanding this principle in a proper manner, being, as I conceive, the chief reason why the old erroneous mechanical system of Fencing and Teaching is still prevalent. It must, however, be observed, that although the explanations of, and manner of executing most of the motions, &c. in this work, are sufficient for the general comprehension of young fencers, nevertheless, in many situations in the assaults, it will be found proper to *vary* in some measure the *manner* of executing the parades, feints, &c. which, of course, require different illustrations and explanations, *after* the pupil is sufficiently advanced in the Art to be able to understand them. It is, therefore, in those different situations where it essentially requires the experience and abilities of a master to point out clearly and in a *convincing* manner, in which situations in the assault those variations are proper to be adopted, and when to use them with advantage.

Now this mode of instruction cannot possi-

bly be given without foil in hand, and by the parties placing themselves in those situations which different fencers are likely to be in when in the assault; because if these explanations are omitted in the lessons, the pupil will, when he happens to meet with a different fencer, find himself greatly embarrassed if he is only accustomed to an *invariable routine* of instruction; that is, by *regular* explanations to a certain number of stated rules; for it should be well understood by the young scholar, that, in *Fencing*, as well as in most sciences, *rules* can only give *general* results; it is delicacy of judgement, properly cultivated by an experienced teacher, and a sudden and happy application of these rules, as well as readiness to seize and to execute them that constitutes the fruit and habit of regular practice. Fencing, like other sciences, cannot be degraded to a *mechanical* art, that may be infallibly practised by a *receipt*; nor can it be thoroughly and completely acquired by *only reading* a book upon the subject.

I wish these observations to be well understood by the generality of scholars, lest, by a too hasty dependence in their masters' abilities, they might, in the result, be greatly deceived. "*Dans le royaume des avengles les borgnes sont les rois.*" For, it must be remembered, there are *Charlatans*

in Fencing as in most other arts, and it requires some penetration in a pupil to discover, whether he is or not under such a teacher. I mention this, because I know there are several pretended Fencing-masters who possess no more knowledge of the Art than what they have collected from the mere *reading* a fencing-book, or by seeing others fence; and even if the book be written in the most scientific manner possible, if a person pretends to teach *precisely* according to its directions, the pupils of such a master would be throwing their money away for nothing, as they could acquire full as much knowledge by practising themselves together what they had learnt in the work, and perhaps much more; for they are, on such occasions, more likely to *reflect*, to use *their own* judgement, and to *argue* together upon the various movements, &c. than by being under the *influence* and *authority* of such a *mechanical* teacher; for young persons in general are too *timid* to ask for a clear explanation of what is taught them; and another great misfortune is, that too much *confidence* is generally placed in the abilities of a master, consequently the pupils are liable to imbibe the teacher's errors and perversions, and in youthful minds impressions of *every* kind are *lasting*, the effects of which are for some time afterwards very difficult to overcome.

To understand the Art of using the Sword, as well as any other science of self-defence properly, the pupil should be made to comprehend the *intention* and *propriety* of every parade, thrust, or feint he is to execute, as well as to make him perceive their probable *consequences* in the *different situations* of the assault; and in order to direct his judgement in those cases, it will be readily conceived, from what has been already observed, that (if a person wishes to become *confident* of his knowledge, and to be able to cope with another) some *oral* instructions are absolutely necessary, while he has the foil in his hand, arising from the different situations the parties are likely to be in while making the assault, examples of which can only be shewn when the parties are together. Now, if these various and necessary explanations are omitted by the teacher, either through neglect or ignorance, it is certain that the unreflecting scholar is imposed upon, being made to act like, or very little better than, a mere automaton; or at most, it is shewing them no more than the *surface*, and leaving the principal subject untouched.

I will venture to assert, that it is in consequence of the omission of those necessary explanations, that Fencing is, in general, thought so very un-

interesting and is so much misconceived; from this circumstance it also arises, that when the pupil has acquired only the simple positions, he very often leaves off his lessons, imagining that he is *perfected*, whereas it is a matter of doubt whether he has acquired even those bodily motions in a proper manner; for we are not to judge of a master's abilities in consequence of his long and continued *practice* in teaching positions. Much more than this is necessary to teach well. A professor must be familiarly and scientifically acquainted with the grounds and principles of his profession, if he wishes his lessons to be intelligible, and of proper service.

The master's excellence as a teacher, likewise, cannot be said to depend on his Fencing *well*, by mere dint of *practice alone*, the more essential part of his study being to form his pupil with *dispatch* and *confidence*, as nothing is more certain than that to teach well is a much more difficult task than the practice itself; for it must not be supposed that the possessing some general notions is sufficient, this being merely the outlines of the science.

It is far from my intention to allude to, or to depreciate any one *particular* mode of Teaching or Fencing; my sole wish is to use my utmost

endeavours to advance the Art itself as much towards perfection as possible, and to try to benefit those who perhaps may not have had the advantage I have had in being well taught, nor the good fortune to make the proper reflections and necessary improvements on the erroneous system of Fencing and Teaching so very prevalent.

I also hope that the present undertaking may serve as a *clue* for more observations on an Art so necessary to the completion of a gentleman's education, as it is certain that the more commentators there are upon any art or science, the more will it be likely to arrive at perfection; for, as Dr. Johnson truly observes, "Every art is improved by the emulation of competitors." And if I am so fortunate in being the means of creating this stimulus amongst the fencing-masters and amateurs, I shall think myself amply rewarded for my pains.

At the same time, I earnestly caution the intelligent young amateur, before he adopts any of these new methods of executing the different movements, &c. in Fencing, to submit them to the test of the strictest examination, and to determine, if possible, how far they appear to be consistent with *reason* and practicability.

This can easily be done by comparing the work with others on the same subject, and judging accordingly, as well as by reflecting whether his master has given him all the necessary explanations for the clear understanding of the various motions he makes in his lessons. This method of proceeding is, I believe, the fairest and likeliest way of improvement for the pupil, who I wish at all times to make use, but not too hastily, and without partiality, of his own judgement, and not upon every occasion to take for certain evidence any proposition upon the authority alone of a master, merely because he is a *master*, or that the same may be found in print.

If, after what has been said, I should unfortunately be thought to have shewn any degree of presumption in attempting what I am unable to perform, at least I wish to prove that I am, and shall always be, open to conviction; submitting with pleasure to the decision of any of the profession, provided, however, it be clearly demonstrated, that what I have advanced is erroneous or impracticable.

But, as I have had the good fortune, by my method of teaching and attention to the errors and obstructions which have retarded the progress of

numerous lovers of Fencing, to meet with the approbation of a great number of the most respectable and sensible persons in the kingdom, I have every reason to believe that my lessons have not been entirely useless, and as they have gained me, without the aid of flattery or delusion, the favour and friendship of many distinguished persons it will, I am induced to hope, be thought a sufficient excuse for my venturing to publish these remarks, which have not been hastily or incautiously made, but are the result of a length of instruction under my father, whose abilities in his profession it would be needless, and perhaps improper, for me here to dwell upon, as he is sufficiently known, having been upwards of thirty-six years in this kingdom.

Having, therefore, been taught in the best manner from my childhood, since I was able to hold a foil in my hand; and having also made many observations on my profession, added to a great deal of experience in the Art of *Teaching*; I have ventured, with these advantages, and with my father's permission, to submit this little work to the inspection of a liberal, impartial, and discerning Public; and if this humble attempt to render myself in some measure a little useful to an indispensible branch of education, which

has in all ages been much esteemed by the first nobility, should be favourably received, I may, probably, on some future occasion, endeavour to go a little deeper into the subject.

INTRODUCTION.

TO enter into a long account of the origin and use of arms is entirely foreign to my purpose, and quite unnecessary. It is sufficient to observe, that since their first invention they have, in all ages, been esteemed as the noblest and most necessary means for the preservation of our laws and the defence of our dominions.

The *Sword*, in particular, is of the greatest antiquity, and has always been considered as one of the most honourable and useful, having on many occasions been the means of its possessor acquiring greater glory than he could have done by any other weapon.

The ancients made use of the sword in various ways; sometimes with a shield and buckler; sometimes with a helmet, and, till very lately, in Italy

and Spain, with a dagger, and at other times with a cloak and dark-lantern.

However, the *Small-Sword alone* was latterly found to be of more general utility, and, after its first introduction among the Romans, was greatly esteemed and improved by all nations; more especially by the French, who deemed it of such national importance, that, in order to promote its greater use, Lewis the XIVth was pleased to grant letters patent to a certain number of "*Maitres en* "*fait d'Armes*," (twenty in number) who had rendered themselves eminent in their professions, ordering that none but these qualified masters should be privileged to teach in Paris.

But this honour could not be obtained by interest alone. The candidates were obliged to display their abilities in public by fencing with six chosen professors, and if they were beaten by *two palpable hits*, they were "*renvoyer a l'ecole*;" sent back to school, as still unqualified to teach in Paris.

Hence it may be supposed that, as this noble Art was protected by Kings, it was considered as one of the principal branches of a polite education, and we accordingly find that the nobility and

gentry remained longer under their Fencing Masters than under any other teachers.

" Pyrard assures us, that the Art of Fencing " is so highly esteemed in the East Indies, that " none but princes and noblemen are allowed to " teach it. They wear a badge or cognizance on " their right arms, called in their language *essaru*, " which is put on with great ceremony, like the " badges of our Orders of knighthood, by the " kings themselves."—*See* " Fencing" *in the English Encyclopædia*, 1802.

The *Sword* is worn by Kings and Princes as an ornament to Majesty, and as a mark of courage and grandeur, distinguishing the nobility from the lower ranks of men, as well as keeping ill designing people in proper subjection; it is indeed one of the most *useful* instruments, having the advantage of fire-arms, in that it is as well defensive as offensive, and is far preferable to the Pike or any long weapon, not only because it is more wieldy and easy of carriage, but also in consequence of the perfection to which it has been brought by *art*.

Indeed from the practice of the *small Sword* innumerable advantages are found to arise, but as

I may possibly be accused of saying too much in its praise, and of consulting my own prepossession in favour of the "*manly foils*," it will, perhaps, not be unsuitable to give an extract relative to its utility from a popular Treatise on Fencing, written by the late Monsieur Danet, Director of the Royal Academy of Privileged Fencing Masters in Paris; and who was, at that time, esteemed a man of the first eminence in his profession:

" Pouvoir jouir de soi-même, sans être troublé
" par la crainte de perdre la vie vis-à-vis d'un
" enemi cruel qui veut notre perte and qui nous
" recherche, ne sent-on pass que le cri de la
" nature n'aspire quá ce bonheur? Or quel
" moyen plus certain de nous donner de la tran-
" quilité, de la confiance & du courage, que la
" science de se defendre avec autant du sureté
" que de supériorité. Si l'exercice des Armes est
" le protecteur & le conservateur de nos jours;
" s'il peut devenir même notre liberateur autant
" de fois qu'on voudroit-y attenter, comment peut-
" on différer un instant à en étudier les principes
" pour le les rendre familiers?"

And with regard to its advantages he says—
" Cependant, que l'on veuille comparer les Arts
" avec les Arts, en-est il un dont on puisse tirer

" plus de fruit que celui des Armes? Lui seul " assurément contribue plus essentiellement à " former la constitution, le tempérament & le " caractère d'un jeune homme, & lui acquiert " plus de principes d'education, & de bonnes " qualités que toutes les sciences qu'on puisse " lui faire pratiquer.

" En effet, ce'st l'exercise de cet Art, qui en " fort peut de temps developpe son corps, l'affer- " mit, le place sur les jambes; c'est lui qui fait " prendre des mouvemens justes, assure son port, " lui donne de la force, de la souplesse, de la " legéreté, de l'adresse, de la précision, de l'ai- " sance, des graces et de la noblesse; c'est lui " qui dans les circonstances régle son ambition, " réprime sa témérité, tempère sa pétulance, " adoucit son caractère & anime sa confiance; " c'est lui qui lui apprenant à se vaincre pour vain- " cre les autres, lui imprime le respect, & lui com- " munique, avec la vraie bravoure, la douceur, " la politesse, la modération, la circomspection, " la prudence, est la sagesse . . . . . .

" Par dessus ces avantages, il en entretient & " fortifie encore un autre, le plus precieux de " tous, ces't la *santé*. Fort rarement la voit on " dérangé guard on exerce les Armes avec modér- " ation & proportionnément à ses forces," &c. &c.

It is unnecessary, I conceive, to give a translation of the above passages as, generally speaking, few persons, except those of *liberal education*, ever *think* of, much less *learn*, the *Art of Fencing*, and *they*, of course, are understood to be familiar with the French language.

To shew also that the use of the sword was, even so far back as 1692, when it was quite in its infancy, considered as of great importance, I shall take the liberty of giving another extract from an English book on this subject, written and published, at that time, by Sir W. Hope. In the Epistle to his reader he says—" I really had no " other motive for giving this small piece to the " publick, but as I have before told you, that I " thought it might be a means to cause our " youth to apply to it most earnestly, and so en- " encourage the Fencing Masters to bring the " Art to a greater perfection if possible; that so " our youths may be perfected in an Art, of which " at present, and really it is a *disgrace* to our " nation, they are so ignorant of; it being of so " great use to mankind, but more especially to " *gentlemen*, because, ordinarily, *they* stand more " in need of it than others, and therefore it is " most proper that *they*, *above all other people*, " should understand it," &c.

Again, as some persons imagine that Fencing is necessary for the *military alone*, and *not* for the *navy*, let us hear what Mr. M'Arthur, of the Royal Navy, says on this subject, another English writer on Fencing. He very justly observes, that "It is to be regretted that a method is not "adopted in our navy of exercising the ship's "company of frigates, and such small vessels of "war as are liable to be boarded, with simple "fencing, in the stile of broadsword play, (com-"monly called cudgelling) as it would be of the "utmost utility in the offensive and defensive "attacks of boarding. This might be easily ac-"complished by making it a branch of the duties "of a Master of Arms qualified to exercise the "crew, or such of them as might be allotted for "boarding, in the rudiments of the Art; and from "the spirit of emulation prevailing among them, "they would soon make themselves proficient by "a little practice.

"Where Commanders have encouraged this "exercise among their ship's company, singular "advantages have ensued in the action of board-"ing sword in hand, both with respect to the "safety of their men, and the capture of the "enemy: a particular instance of which we have "had this war, in the action of one of his Majesty's

" armed cutters with *two French privateers*, both " of superior force; when, after having met with " powerful resistance in boarding, and capturing " one of them, after the other had struck, not a " man was slain, though several of the enemy " shared that fate. The gallant commander, fore- " seeing the advantage that might result from " cudgelling, had previously encouraged this ex- " ercise, by supplying the crew with basket " guards and cudgels."

Note.—The word "*cudgels*" above, does not signify those kind of short thick sticks used by our countrymen and the Irish, at prize fights, &c. but are meant as *canes* with baskets, adapted for the practice of the *Highland* broadsword, vulgarly called cudgelling.

Indeed I am perfectly of opinion, which is corroborated by numberless persons who have experienced the utility of fencing, that for the *navy* it should be considered as one of the most essential branches of a nautical education, and ought to be encouraged by Captains and Commanders as much as possible. The ship's company should, every one of them, be compelled to understand the use of the sword familiarly, previously to their going abroad, and should continue practising it at all

times on board; for they have, if possible, even more occasion for fencing than the army, because, in general, they are more frequently at *close quarters* with the enemy than the military are.

Before I conclude, I beg to submit to the serious consideration of Captains and Commanders, besides their understanding fencing themselves, to promote its cultivation among their ship's company as much as is in their power, for the benefit resulting from it is incalculable. The best way, in my opinion, to attain this advantage is, when the Captains and Commanders have obtained a confident knowledge of the Art, to teach and practice it, with those next in command, so that they may be enabled to teach it to the crew, and by this example, which serves as an encouragement, the company would soon be expert, and take pleasure in its practice; or, which would be still better, a Fencing Master might be appointed to the ship.

In conclusion, I hope from what has been here said, that it will be considered as sufficient to convince the reader of the necessity of having a proper knowledge of the Art of Sword Defence, and that if he is destined for the army or navy it is of the greatest importance.

Note.—Although this little Work is more especially designed for those who have attained some knowledge of fencing (such as the positions, &c.) I have, nevertheless, thought it proper, with regard to some of the first rudiments, to explain them in the same manner as to a *beginner*, because, in several respects, our method of *placing* the pupil differs materially from the common manner; and I must observe that, in order to render myself as intelligible as possible, I have taken the liberty of availing myself of much circumlocution, so that my observations and remarks may appear as clear as possible, a contrary method being that which I might probably have failed in.

*** As the Reader may, perhaps, on first opening this work, be surprised at not finding any drawings to illustrate the different positions in Fencing, it is hoped the intelligent young amateur will be aware that he is already expected to be familiar with those mere rudiments, which may be acquired with a little attention in a very few practical lessons under a proper master, or at

least the reader should, to understand the treatise, be acquainted with the *meanings* of the various *terms* made use of in Fencing.

My principal aim in drawing up this work is, as I have said before, to shew that the *art* and *science* of using the sword chiefly depends (besides a right way of making the various motions) on *judgement* in deceiving the adversary's movements, and in not being deceived by his, *i. e.* sometimes by leading him to make a motion which you have premeditated, and which you are accordingly prepared to counteract with advantage to yourself, and sometimes to make him believe that you will fall into his snare, when, by your anticipation of what he expected you to do, he thereby again falls into your own trap, &c.

Where our method of teaching the simple positions and motions of the foil varies from the old manner, they are, I believe, sufficiently corrected and explained without the additional and perplexing reference to plates, which, by adhering to them, are very likely to be the means of contracting an exceeding stiff and aukward manner of executing them, as well as tending considerably to prevent their being, by such a habit, *effectual* on all occasions, even admitting the adversary is

deceived by them. At the same time, I take this opportunity to mention that should any gentleman wish, at any time, for more clear and convincing explanations of any part of this work, or further instructions in order to become as complete in the Art as possible, I shall be extremely happy to attend him, if in or near London, as I continue, as usual, to teach privately in town two or three times a week.

Letters addressed to Mr. ROLAND, *Greenwich*, will be attended to.

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ERRATA.

Page 17, line 1—for *tack*, read, *time your attack.*
Do. 23, line 7—for *longing*, read, *longeing.*
Do. 99, line 7—for *disarmament*, read, *disarm.*
Do. 119, line 7—for *disengagement*, read, *disengagements.*

CHAP. I.

SEC. I.

On the Position of the Body for being on Guard.

THE first thing that should be clearly understood in Fencing, is that situation of the body which is generally, but rather improperly, termed "*being on guard.*"

By the *position* of the body for being on guard, whether with the small-sword, broad-sword, or by any other mode of self-defence, is meant such a situation of all the parts of the body, as enables them to give their mutual assistance to defend or

attack, according to the just principles of theart of self-defence; and by that means to make the intended motions for defending or attacking with ease, vigour, and certainty. And as in all bodily exercises a good air, freedom, animation, and a just disposition of the body and limbs are necessary, so are they more especially in Fencing; the least disorder in this case being of dangerous consequences; for as the *position* of the guard is the centre whence all the different motions proceed, and which should communicate strength and quickness to every part of the body, if there be the least irregularity in any one part, there cannot be that agreeableness, power of defence, precision, and quickness, that is requisite.

In order, therefore, to be well on the *position* of the guard, it is requisite that the feet, as the foundation that conduces

chiefly to communicate freedom and strength to the other parts, should be placed in such a lineal manner, and distance between them, as may be most advantageous, so that the body may rest equally on both legs.

But previously to falling on the position of the guard, you should observe to stand naturally upright on your legs, without the least stiffness or affectation ; your sight fixed on your adversary's *sword* (and *not* at your adversary's *eyes* as is generally supposed) in order to observe the motions of his wrist ; your arms hanging easily down by the side of your thighs, but without touching them ; the sword being supported by the *fort* of it in your left hand at the side of the body ; your heels both together forming an angle, the right toes facing the adversary.

In this position draw your sword, by carrying your right hand with ease and grace to the handle of it, which should be at the same time raised a little, by bending the left arm to meet the right. This being done, place yourself on the position of the guard, with a graceful, but unaffected appearance, animated with a brave boldness; for nothing requires a man to exert himself more than sword-defence, and it is as difficult to attain such an air of intrepidity without much practice, as it is difficult to become perfectly expert in the art.

It is generally directed by most Fencing Masters that the body, on the position of the guard, should rest wholly on the left leg; but I am of opinion that this is a wrong method, for it is self-evident, that the body resting on *both* legs must be more firmly planted than if it rested only on *one*. However, if the body should incline rather more on one side than

on the other, undoubtedly I should prefer its being supported on the left, because you will thereby possess more freedom to execute the necessary motions, than if you had rested your body mostly on the right; but it must be well understood, that if the body is *wholly* supported on the left side, it will be found, after a little experience, to be attended with great disadvantages.

In order, therefore, to acquire a proper stability on this position of the guard, I think the distance between the two feet will be found to be, for persons of all heights, about two-thirds of the distance of the longe.

To prove that this is the most natural and firm position, from executing all the different motions with the necessary precision and vigour, you have only to observe, that even those masters who teach the old posi-

tion, *i. e.* that of being supported entirely on the left leg, whether in the heat of the assault they do not inadvertently, as it were, stand in the above more *natural* and firm position as here recommended.

I am well aware, that for a mere beginner to place himself, immediately, upon taking the first lesson, at so great a distance between the feet, would be extremely fatiguing, and almost impossible for him to remain five minutes in that state; but by extending the distance between the feet every time you practise or take a lesson, of about an inch or more, you will shortly acquire this necessary habit of stability in the position of the guard, without any inconvenience, and which will be attended with considerable advantage in the execution of all the motions.

Perhaps some persons may observe, that

this position is not so *graceful* as the old one; but I wish to be understood, that I am not here speaking of graceful Fencing *alone*; what is of most import, is that situation of the body which is most conducive to the *defence* of your life, when engaged in a serious affair. We shall see what graceful fencing consists of by and by.

The line of the position of the guard is taken from the left heel, near the ancle of the hindmost part of the right heel. The point of the right foot should be in a line with the adversary's: the left knee bent over the point of the left foot, and keeping the right knee also a little bent, that they may both have freedom of motion.

The intention of keeping the knees bent while on the position of the guard, is to enable you to advance or retreat, and to longe or recover with quickness, ease, and

vigour. The body must also be upright, which not only gives a better appearance, but greater power of execution, and more liberty to advance or retreat, as occasion offers, being supported equally on both legs.

The right elbow should be rather lower than the left; the sword arm as flexible as possible, and almost extended; the point of the sword about three inches above the horizontal line of your right wrist, and facing your adversary's breast, the blades being joined at about the middle of each.

The necessity of keeping the point of the sword somewhat above the line of the wrist is obvious, because you thereby prevent the adversary's having that command with his sword over your's, by which he might, when you least expected it, *cross* your blade.

The *crossing* of the blade signifies a kind of disarm, performed by a jirk from the wrist, with the *fort* part of the blade upon the *feeble* of your adversary's, occasioning either a disarm, or at least forcing it, at a sufficient distance from the line of the body, so as to enable him to deliver an effectual thrust while the body is thus exposed.

This being recollected, hold the foil by pressing the fingers equally on the handle, in order to *feel* the sword firm and free in the hand. I cannot, at the same time, too much recommend you to be particularly careful not to hold the foil in the least stiff, as such a habit would be the means of preventing you executing the different movements with freedom and quickness, as well as being the means of fatiguing your arm and wrist much sooner than by keeping it

quite flexible, as well as being attended with many other disadvantages.

The meaning of *feeling* the sword consists in a proper command of the *fort* and *feeble* of the blade in the hand, in order to communicate to its point the proper motion and action that is necessary in making the different motions and feints. You will also please to observe, that, at all times, in drawing your sword from its scabbard, you should place the point *facing* your adversary's right breast, *before* you fall on the position of the guard.

It is particularly requisite to attend to the caution here mentioned, as most scholars are very apt to do the contrary, putting themselves inconsiderately on the position of the guard *before* the point is brought to face the adversary's body, and sometimes

even before drawing the sword from the sheath. This is not only attended with danger, but is quite contrary to reason; because, if you happen to do this with an experienced fencer, he will make a thrust, which he has a right to do, the instant your right foot is placed on the ground, and very probably will hit you, before your sword is properly placed in the hand for defence.

Observe also, that it is prudent on all occasions to present yourself on guard *out* of the reach of your adversary's longe, as it may happen that your *mind* is not prepared to receive an attack at the instant of falling on guard; consequently the want of this precaution might be the occasion of your being hit at that time. All this is avoided by the necessary recollection of putting yourself on guard *out* of measure, by which means you will be better situated to defend or attack, by gaining the proper

distance in advancing carefully within measure with short steps, and, at the same time, being prepared to receive an attack without being surprised, or in the least fluttered.

SEC. II.

On the Necessity of the Mind *being on Guard.*

NOW what has been said on the mere *position* of the body for the guard is, I believe, sufficient for any person to attain it with a very little practice. But for those persons who wish to become real scientific fencers, a more extensive idea of "*being* "*on guard*" is necessary.

It should be well comprehended that in Fencing, as well as in any other science of self-defence, that the mere *position* alone of the body is not, properly speaking, "*being* "*on guard.*" For if that were the case, you have only to place an automaton in the same position, and then to say that he is "*on guard.*" A sentinel, on his post,

is said to be "*on guard*; if you ask him *why* he stands there, he will naturally tell you that he is "*on guard*"; that is, to *watch*, by way of defence and security, to *provide against*, and to *protect* whatever motions are, or may be made by the enemy. Precisely the same idea, of "*being on* "*guard*," you should entertain while standing in front of your adversary, either with sword or foil in hand.

If this be attentively considered, it will be readily understood, that it is the *mind* which is and ought to be continually "*on* "*guard*;" by being so prepared, that you may feel within yourself confident that you are, to the best of your judgment, sufficiently *aware* of your adversary's intended motions, and, of course, ready to act, as circumstances require, whether you are in the usual position of the guard, or in any other. It is, therefore, clear, that the *at-*

titude is the least part that is requisite to be comprehended in Fencing, as your mind should be equally *on guard* on the longe as on the recover; and hence it follows, that no *precise rules* can be given for this state of *self-confidence*, as the Reader must be convinced, that, in this case, it depends chiefly on one's own *judgment*, and, in some measure, upon the knowledge of the adversary's abilities. In whatever attitude you may think it necessary to present yourself facing your adversary, if your *mind* is prepared to attack and defend, you will be, properly speaking, "*on guard.*"

Nor indeed is the *position itself* of the guard that is usually adopted, *invariably* the same, because, admitting you were to make it a *rule* to stand upon all occasions in the same position for the guard, as is taught, you will oftentimes find yourself much embarrassed with different kind of

fencers; I mean principally with regard to the situation of the point of the sword being at all times facing your adversary's breast; for instance, one man will place himself in such a position of the guard, that his sword-arm will be very much bent, and the point of the blade quite in a different direction to the line of your body. Another fencer will present himself before you with his sword-arm quite extended; some with the point much lower than the wrist, others much higher, and various unthought of positions, all of which tend greatly to perplex the unexperienced fencer. If, therefore, you *invariably* keep the point of your sword in a direct line with the adversary's breast, with all these different kind of fencers, you will not be able to perceive the motion that may be made to attack you, owing to the blades being at a distance from each other; nor to ascertain whether the thrust will be made at the same

tack him, making what is termed by the French, "*coup pour coup.*" The method I would recommend against any kind of these attitudes, is, in general, to endeavour to *join* his blade, whether your point is in a line with the adversary's body or not, for the reason that he must either *quit* or slide along your blade upon whatever motion he makes to attack you, consequently you will be better enabled to perceive his motion, and accordingly better situated to defend or attack.

It may undoubtedly happen, that your adversary will chuse to prevent your joining his blade with yours, by changing every time you attempt to feel it; in which case, it would be best not to follow it too frequently, but to keep your point in a direct line with his breast, and observing very particularly, while in that situation, to be as much out of the reach of his longe

as possible, remaining always firm, flexible, and intrepid, as has been already recommended; so that if the adversary wishes to attack, he will be obliged to advance, and must likewise make a wide motion with the foil, in consequence of its being much out of the line of your body. In this situation, whatever motion he attempts to make, you will be sufficiently prepared, *i. e.* "on guard," to take the time thrust upon him, or to make whatever motion circumstances may dictate.

If you perceive a favourable opportunity to attack the adversary first, it will be necessary to advance *cautiously*, but without the least appearance of timidity, towards him, with a firm and resolute step, making your motions as small as possible, and being, at the same time, prepared in your mind to counteract his time, or any other thrust which he might make at the time of your advancing.

With regard to directing what *particular* motions should be made in these, or in any other situations, or when you ought to attack, would be of no service whatever, as it depends entirely on your own *judgment* to discover what is necessary to execute, at the instant the adversary exposes his body.

These latter observations regard chiefly such persons who have attained some practical knowledge of Fencing. Those who never had instructions from a master, will probably understand but little by them, unless they are explained orally, and with the foil in hand.

That there are situations in which you may find it of some advantage to be in the same position of the guard as usually taught, I do not deny, I mean with regard to the body being supported wholly on the left leg. But this is only when you

have acquired much judgment in the art, and that you wish to induce or tempt your adversary to attack, by your making an *appel*, in which case it is necessary to have the body supported entirely on the left leg; after the appel, it is very easy to resume your proper firm position of the guard.—The explanation of the appel is treated of in its proper place.

SEC. III.

On Thrusting, or Longeing.

WHEN you wish to hit your adversary, it is necessary, in order to reach his body, frequently to make a thrust or longe. The most natural and firm position of the longe is executed thus:—

It is first necessary that the parts of the body should, in order to assist each other in making the thrust, be so disposed and situated on the position of the guard as that the wrist should draw with it the bend of the arm and the upper part of the body, at the same time straightening the left knee, which will give vigour and swiftness to the longe. The body being thus drawn forward by the quick motion of the wrist and

other parts, necessarily brings the right foot forward, in order to support it, and gives by that means the thrust a greater length, while the left foot remains firm and flat on the ground.

There is no direct rule for the length of the longe, as it depends on the person's heighth; some persons being much taller than others, the distance, therefore, must of course, be regulated accordingly. You should, however, extend the longe as much as possible, *provided* you feel yourself firm and steady in that position, and that you can recover with ease and quickness to your former position of the guard, immediately after the longe, and without the least embarrassment.

The longe, in general, should be in a straight line with the adversary. Also, let your body remain, while on the longe,

naturally upright, but without the least appearance of stiffness. Your left arm should likewise fall with the hand about six inches distance from your left thigh, and both the longe and recover should be done with an easy "*tout ensemble.*"

Observe, that when longing in the position of tierce (with the nails downward) there is no necessity for turning also the left hand inwards in the same position as in the old method. The left hand should, at all times, fall and rise in the same manner as it was when on the position of the guard. The utility of the left arm falling and rising is, that after having delivered the thrust, it should serve as a *balance* to assist the recovery to your orginal position of the guard, with facility, ease, and quickness; which will be found, after a little practice, to be attended with great *advantage*, as well as its having an elegant appear-

ance. You should also particularly observe while thrusting, to keep the right wrist as much elevated as possible, with the nails turned quite upward, so that the point of your foil, while on the adversary's body, should be much below the horizontal line of your right wrist. In this position of the longe your right wrist will be in general about the height of your head; since if you were to thrust with your point and wrist on the *same* line your touches would not only be very disagreeably hard, but would likewise be the means of breaking your foil on the adversary's body, which, if it unfortunately happens in those kind of straight-forward thrusts, will greatly risk the wounding him. It makes no difference, in point of *raising* the wrist, whether you thrust in the position of carte or of tierce; in either position your wrist should, at the time of delivering the thrust, be raised as high as possible,

provided the point of your blade be near enough to the adversary's body to hit him conveniently, when the longe is finished; but this depends in a great measure on the distance you are in when making the thrust, in which case you must raise your wrist accordingly.

Every one will readily agree that when fencing with a friend, you should always render your mode of play as light and as agreeable to each other as possible. (See remarks on those who fence contrary to the Science.) It is also necessary to remark that in thrusting, whether it be *within* or *without* the arm, the *fort* of your blade should be *opposed* to the adversary's foil, in order to cover yourself from a thrust that might accidentally or otherwise be made at the same time of your thrust.

SEC. IV.

On recovering on the position of the Guard.

AFTER a thrust is delivered, whether you have succeeded in hitting your adversary or not, it is necessary to resume your former position of the guard, which is termed *recovering on guard.*—To recover in a proper manner, you must observe to throw up your left arm almost extended, but with flexibility and activity, at the same time bending your left knee, by which method you will recover with greater ease and steadiness your proper firm position of the guard. Understand also, that it is not a general rule to recover *exactly* in the same position of your sword as it was in previous to the delivery of your thrust.—Circumstances very frequently

occur in which it will be proper to recover in a different manner. Nor is it possible to direct precisely in what position your sword-arm should be immediately upon the recover, as it depends entirely upon the action of the adversary. However, you may remember at all times, that, after delivering your thrust, whether having hit or not, to recover, so prepared in your mind, (*i. e.* being on guard) as to be enabled to defend yourself *instantly*, in case the adversary should be quick in attacking you while recovering.

It is very necessary to attend to the above caution, as it may sometimes happen that you imagined you had hit your adversary, when in reality you had not, or perhaps only grazed him, consequently you might neglect to recover sufficiently prepared for immediate defence.

SEC. V.

On the Advance.

AS it frequently happens in Fencing that you are not at a convenient distance from your adversary to hit him upon the longe, it is therefore necessary, in order to gain this proper distance to hit, to make a step forward, termed an *advance*.

When you find it necessary to make this motion, you must, to do it properly, incline the body sufficiently on your left leg, so as to enable you to raise your right foot clear from the ground, at the same moment carrying it forward in a straight line with your adversary, and when you have replaced it on the ground, you must instantly make the same motion with the left leg,

and on the same line; observing to retain an equal distance between the feet while advancing, so that you do not make a wider motion with one foot than with the other; after which you should resume your original firm position of the guard.

SEC. VI.

On the Retreat.

THIS motion is only just the contrary to that of the advance, being made by carrying the left foot, which, in this case, moves first, in a line backward, and the right one to follow it, inclining the body on the right leg, in order to enable you to raise the left foot freely and clear from the ground; after which replace yourself in your proper position of the guard. In either of the above steps the advance or retreat should be performed only by two simple motions, and as steady and supple as possible.

Observe, that it is prudent to make a much shorter step in the advance than in the retreat; for by making a wide step

when advancing, your adversary might take the time thrust if you are not prepared to counteract it.

In retreating, provided you wish to be out of measure, it matters not how wide a a step you make, as your adversary must *advance* to thrust at you, consequently you will better perceive his motion, and will have time to act accordingly.

The words *measure* and *distance* are frequently used promiscuously, they being synonymous in Fencing; in the same manner as both longing and thrusting mean the same thing.

The old method teaches what is called the *Double Advance*, to explain which would be waste of time, it being dangerous to attempt it against a person who understands Fencing; as is also jumping backwards and

forwards.—It is sufficient to observe, that there is no other safe way of advancing or retreating than that which has already been stated.

CHAP. II.

SEC. I.

ON THE SIMPLE PARADES.

On the Parade of Carte.

To parry, signifies to oppose your blade to, or to strike against that of your adversary's, in order to avoid being hit when he makes a thrust at your body.

The parade of carte is generally used when your adversary makes a thrust *within* the arm, whether accompanied by a previous feint, or any other motion.

But before I proceed to any further account of the parades, I think it proper to explain what is meant by thrusting *within the arm*. When, upon joining blades with your adversary, you find your sword in a line *between* his sword-arm and the left side of his body; in this situation it is termed being *within* the arm, either on position of the guard or on the longe. *Over the arm* is, of course the reverse, by changing or passing under his blade to the other side of his arm; in which situation your foil will be found to be between his sword-arm and the right side of his body.

This being recollected, to parry carte with proper effect is done thus: when your adversary thrusts within the arm, you must oppose your blade to his, accompanied by a little spring from the wrist, but without any force whatever, turning your nails up-

ward at the time of parrying, and be very careful to parry with the *fort* part of your blade against the *feeble* part of your adversary's, whether he makes his thrust high or low.

From this method of parrying it will be perceived that you should *not* parry with an extended arm, as is frequently taught, as it will be found, after a little practice and observation, that if you parry with a straight arm the *fort* of your blade will be opposed to the fort of your adversary's; and moreover it is very likely that the *feeble* of your blade will come against his *fort*, consequently your parade, in either case, cannot possibly have that power of *resistance* which it would and ought to have, were you to parry as has been recommended, and which is simply done by *bending* the elbow, at the same time bringing your wrist as near to the side of your

body as is most convenient to the freedom of your parade.—To this manner of parrying, some caviller may object that " it is " possible to parry with the *fort* against " the feeble of the blade, *without* bending " the elbow." But it should be observed that this depends entirely on the *distance* of the adversary when he delivers his thrust. However, this subject will be better explained at the end of the *simple parades*.

SEC. II.

On the parade of Tierce.

THIS parade is performed when your adversary thrusts *over* the arm, by turning the wrist with the nails downwards, and towards the outside of your body, the *principle* of which is exactly the same as that of carte, the only difference in the execution of it, consisting in the *turn* of the wrist.

Observe, that in parrying either carte or tierce the same edge of your blade will parry *both* parades, provided you turn your wrist in its proper position for each parade. This observation will serve as a guide to ascertain whether your wrist is properly turned when parrying, for you may be

certain that if you form both parades with the same edge of the blade, you will effectually oppose your adversary's sword from the line of your body. The motion of turning your wrist from one parade to the other will describe an exact simicircle.

SEC. III.

On the Parade of the Circle, or half Circle.

THERE has been, even by good Fencers, some controversy respecting this parade, whether it is properly the *circle* or *half-circle*. But as I am humbly of opinion that in this case the mere *name* of the parade is of little or no consequence, and whether its motion describes a *whole circle* or a *demi-circle*, is a matter of very little consequence with regard to the *utility* of the parade. I shall leave it, therefore, to the decision of those persons who are fond of disputing upon such trivial things.—I imagine it will be sufficient to inquire of what real *service* the parade is of itself.

We are told, even by modern teachers,

that this circle parade parries not only *all thrusts*, but prevents *all the feints* that can be made by the adversary. Hence it is natural to conclude, that if this parade possesses such inestimable advantages, there can be no occasion for teaching or practising any other motion for defence, because it is only by a thrust (accompanied by a feint or not) that we are run through the body. Therefore, to avoid this danger, you have only to adopt the circle, or semi-circle parade, and you will be perfectly safe. Whether this doctrine be sound or not, I shall leave to the consideration of competent and impartial judges of the subject.

My intention, however, is not to criticise, but to endeavour to shew its practical utility, and to explain the best method of forming it when it is necessary to be used. Yet it is proper for the clear understand-

ing of most of the motions, to point out what is often erroneously taught, in order to give a better idea of what is *right*, so that the intelligent reader, by seeing and understanding different methods, will be enabled to judge and act accordingly.

Although this parade of the circle is generally directed to be formed with the arm *straight*, I can by no means recommend it to be executed in that unnatural and inconsistent manner. For you will find that by having the arm *extended*, the *fort* of your blade will oppose the fort also of your adversary's, which method would be against the *principle* already mentioned, relative to the parades of carte, and tierce.

Moreover, if you parry with the wrist as high as your chin, (as is taught,) and that your adversary happens to thrust rather low, the *feeble* of your blade will, for cer-

tain, come against the *fort* of your adversary's, which would be quite defenceless. For it requires little demonstration to prove that to oppose a *weaker* power to that of a *greater*, is totally against reason, especially when the difference is so materially great as it would be on such an occasion.

From what has been here said in explanation of this parade of the circle, it will readily appear that to parry the circle in a proper manner, exactly the contrary method must be adopted, which is by *bending* the elbow (as in carte), and at the same time to bring your wrist as near to your body as will enable you to parry with proper freedom, so that the *fort* of your blade should be opposed to the *feeble* of your adversary's, which, I think, will give you much greater power of resistance than by parrying according to the old method.

SEC. IV.

On the Use *of the Circle Parade.*

THE supposition that the circle parade is a *very useful* motion, and, as some persons imagine, *superior* to all the other parades, are mistakes which none but those who have a very superficial knowledge of fencing can entertain. That those fencers who chiefly make use of this parade of the circle in the assault (by continuing to form the circle several times, without intermission) will avoid being touched by a scholar who has had but a few lessons, and from a bad master, I will readily admit; because this whirling manner of parrying is somewhat *confusing* to a person who is unacquainted with the proper science; consequently those who have habituated them-

selves the longest to this *wind-mill* motion will, probably, be the most successful in preventing the adversary touching him; that is, provided they have both of them followed the same mode of instruction, and, of course, both of equal courage.

To explain, without foil in hand, to those persons who have acquired but a little practical knowledge of fencing, or even to those who have had much *practice* without a proper theory, by what means, in general, it is easy to hit these kind of circle parryers, I fear I shall not be able to be so clear as might be wished, because, for the want of a little proper oral instruction with the foils, it will be rather difficult for them to comprehend and make the experiment immediately upon these kind of parryers, who may, by some kind of artifice, which an inexperienced fencer may not discover, render the trial fruitless.

However, I will endeavour to give a general idea of the method which will enable the young practitioner to understand that it is very *possible* to hit these kind of windmill parryers. If, for instance, your adversary forms *literally* the circle, according to the old method, by describing a ring several times, without intermission, you have only to *follow* the same kind of circular motion of his blade, but smaller and within the centre of his circle; at the same time, advancing your point continually towards his body, preserving the same degree of quickness with which the adversary makes his motion. By this method your foil must, for certain, arrive at his body, if he does not *change* to an octave, or any other parade, and if he does change, of course you must have recourse to any feint you think proper to deceive him.

There are other good methods of

avoiding and counteracting this kind of circle, such as by stopping it in the middle by a firm, smart parade of seconde, or by a low carte parade, but they would be too difficult for me to explain without the foils.

SEC. V.

Observations on the Circle Parade.

FROM what has already been said relative to the use of this parade of the circle, it may naturally be concluded that it is an indifferent parade; and especially so, if it be practised according to the usual mode of teaching it.

However, if, when it is found necessary, it is executed according to the method that has been recommended, at least I think it is more consistent with *reason*. But I am of opinion, founded upon much experience, that the circle parade, even in its *best* manner, is, generally speaking, not only an aukward parade, but also a very *disadvantageous* one on many occasions.

Between *good* Fencers it is found to be a much more unnatural position to adopt than any other, on account of the wrist being in a *weak* state in that situation, preventing you to return, if necessary, to any other parade with proper quickness and firmness; and, admitting you do effectually parry with the circle, your riposts (in consequence of the unnatural and weak position of the wrist) are by no means so sure as from any other parade; besides its having several other disadvantages, too numerous to enumerate here. I do not pretend to say that there are *no* situations in which the circle parade is necessary; but as these situations are seldom perceived but by *good* Fencers, of long practice, its adoption should be allowed to them alone.

I have been obliged to dwell thus much on this circle parade, because I have found

by much observation and practice, (the best proof) that to adopt it is, even in its best position, as a *principal* parade, not only the means of rendering your Fencing very inelegant, but frequently of great *disadvantage* against an experienced and scientific Fencer.

SEC. VI.

On the Octave Parade.

THIS Parade, in comparison with what has been said respecting the disadvantages of the circle, is infinitely of more service, and in *one situation especially*, is one of the finest and safest parades that can be made in the assault, causing frequently some of the most effectual thrusts in Fencing. To explain this motion without foil in hand, to a person who has not been sometime under a good master, would perhaps be very unintelligible, and to those who have had that advantage there is no necessity of mentioning it, as they ought to know it. By the bye, it is probable from what I have here said, some persons

may imagine that it is a *secret* thrust.—(See, therefore, secret thrusts, in a following part of this work.)

The *position* of the arm in the octave parade, is nearly similar to that of the circle, the arm being bent, and nails upwards; the only difference consisting of its being on the opposite side to the circle position. The octave is frequently made use of when you miss the circle parade.

SEC. VII.

On the Parade of Prime.

HERE I will freely acknowledge, that, in one respect, this Parade, as it is generally taught, viz with the *elbow bent*, will strictly accord with the principle laid down relative to the other parades; that is, by "*opposing the fort to the feeble*," which cannot be well done without *bending* the arm. Unfortunately, however, I cannot allow that the prime parade should, in *every* respect, be formed as the common practice is, with the point of the sword hanging *perpendicularly* from the wrist by the left side of your body. I have found indeed, from much experience and observation, that it is *not a good* method. To execute this parade with effect, in order to make your

riposte, or return, with precision and quickness, you will find, by a little practice, that it is better to *elevate* the point to nearly an horizontal line with your wrist, which will then be nearly in the same position of that which is called *St. George* in the Austrian broad-sword practice. By this method you will acquire a more *firm* parade, as well as a much easier mode of delivering your riposte in seconde, by reason of having your adversary's body quite open to your command. Some people have said that, " according to this method, you " are liable to bring your adversary's point to your face." This, however, is a mistake, as by proper practice such a circumstance will never happen any more than in any other parade. If that were the consequence, our scholars would not have adopted it in preference to the old method. They are shewn *both* methods, and, after a proper demonstra-

tion of their respective merits, I always leave it to their own *judgment*, to practise that which they find by experience to succeed best.

It is on this principle alone I wish all my observations to be weighed. I detest the maxim of acting upon mere *authority*, without any *convincing proof*.

SEC. VIII.

On the Parade of Seconde or Quinte.

IT is often necessary to make use of this parade after having been *deceived* in the parade of prime; that is, not meeting, as you might have expected, your adversary's blade in the "*Prime*," you return immediately to the other side (seconde) with your wrist low, and the point still lower, the position of the wrist being the same as in prime.

SEC. IX.

General Observations on the Simple Parades.

THE parades which we have noticed, viz. Carte, Tierce, Circle, Octave, Prime, and Seconde, are six. They are called *Simple* Parades, in order to distinguish them from the *Counter* Parades.

Although I have recommended that the simple parades should generally be formed with the arm *bent*, it must be observed, that there may happen situations in the assault wherein it is necessary to parry with the arm a little *extended*; but this depends entirely, as I have said before, on the *distance* of your adversary's sword from your body. Observe however, that it should be an *invariable* principle, in whatever situa-

tion you find yourself in the assault, when you have occasion to parry, to *command* the *feeble* of your adversary's sword with the *fort* of yours. You will, then, find that it very seldom happens to be necessary to parry otherwise than as above directed; for if you are both at the proper distance to reach each other, and your antagonist thrusts at you (which it is not probable he will do without being near enough), it is certain that, to *join* the *feeble* of his blade with your's, you must *bend* your arm, on account of his point being *close* to the side of your body. I know some persons may remark that, by this mode of parrying, your fencing must become very "*ungraceful*;" but it should be understood that I am speaking of its *real utility* alone, to avoid being *hit*, and not of the "*graces*." Yet I will venture to affirm that, although it may not have, what is

called, a *graceful* appearance, it is very far from being *inelegant*.

Observe, that, at *all* times, when you parry, you must endeavour to keep the point of the foil as near to your adversary's body as possible, because the *nearer* the point of your sword is to the body, the shorter time will be occupied in delivering your thrust. The use of these parades being the chief defence of your person, you can never be too attentive in performing them, upon all occasions, as much as possible, according to their just principles, as here recommended.

Before I conclude this subject, it will be proper more particularly to caution the young practitioner, at all times, not to draw back the body (as is generally recommended) while parrying. This is a very dangerous method; for if you accustom yourself to

depend rather upon the motion of your body than of your wrist, you will, almost to a certainty, be frequently hit by an experienced fencer; as by drawing back the body while parrying, which, admitting you succeed in having avoided the hit, you cannot always be sure to return the thrust immediately after your parade, in consequence of the very unsteady position of the body, being so far back on the left. Your antagonist has, therefore, only to follow you up, making a thrust either by a feint or otherwise, when you will be no longer able to draw back your body any farther, unless by retreating.

Instead, therefore, of drawing back the body, at the time of parrying, it would be much more to your advantage in general, to act in a manner quite the *reverse*. If, when your antagonist makes a thrust, you retain your firm position of the guard, and take the

necessary parade, making, at the same time, a small inclination of the body forwards, by this method you will have the advantage, not only of parrying with greater strength, but of being much nearer your adversary's body to deliver your return (called the riposte), and with far greater certainty and quickness than by parrying in the manner practiced by the old custom.

It is a wrong argument to say, in reply, that if you miss your parade you will, by this method, be more exposed to receive your adversary's thrust on the opposite side to that on which you expected to parry. It must be understood that you are not to incline the body forward in the parade until you feel the adversary's blade with your's; the moment after your blade comes in contact with the adversary's, *then* is the time to incline the body.

If it should happen that you are not always quick enough to parry as has been recommended, it is best to make a firm step backward (retreat), and then form your parade, after which regain your proper measure to reach him in the attack.

It is certainly a disadvantage to be often compelled to retreat to avoid being hit; but it is much better to do that than to lean the body so far back on the left leg, as to prevent your executing the necessary motions for a riposte, or any other thrust. It is indeed utterly impossible to have a proper *command* of your sword, if your are not firmly planted on the ground, which you cannot be if you are *supported only on one leg*.

CHAP. III.

SEC. I.

On the Counter Parades.

THE next subject which naturally follows is that which is called *the Counter Parades.* These motions are found to be of great and frequent service in Fencing, when executed with judgement.

To form a counter parade (no matter which) means, that when your adversary simply disengages (either inside or over the arm) you should, instead of the simple motion of following and parrying his blade on the opposite side, pass your blade, by

means of a circular motion, under his wrist, or blade, and return to nearly the same position with your arm that you were in when at first engaged, but *forming* the parade with a firm, supple, and precise motion.

To make this subject still plainer, let us suppose the parties are in action together, and that I have my blade joined to your's in carte, that is, your sword *within* the arm. Now, when you disengage carte over the arm, it is certainly natural to suppose that I should make use of the usual parade of tierce, but I find it, perhaps, more to my purpose to form a counter parade, which is performed thus: *at the time* you disengage, I pass with a small circular motion under your wrist, or blade, and return, by forming my parade in nearly the same position I was in previously to your disengagement.

It is only in consequence of my making the motion of passing round under your wrist that it is called the counter parade; for, in reality, the parade itself is nothing more than plain carte, it being the *contrary* of the side on which it was usual to parry the disengagement. Hence it may be naturally concluded that the French term of the "*contre* parade," or *contrary* parade, was derived from the *manner* in which the simple parade is executed, it being on the *contrary* side that it was the practice of parrying the thrust.

The explanation of the above counter parade is, I think, sufficient for comprehending the method of forming all the other counter parades. They are executed precisely on the same principle, and by the same kind of circular motion. Any simple parade may be formed by a circular motion

from the wrist, which will make it a *counter*.

It must, however, be clearly understood that the counter-parades are chiefly formed upon *disengagements*. If the adversary makes the feint *one-two* rather quick, you cannot well form the counter, as you are liable to be entangled, as it were, within the blades ; but this cannot be very clearly explained without the foil in hand.

Observe that, at all times, when you find it necessary to use the counter parades, to keep a firm, steady, and supple position of the body, otherwise your parades will not have a proper effect, and will consequently prevent you to return the attack with precision and confidence.

SEC. II.

On the Utility of the Counter Parades.

THE advantage arising from a proper command of the counter parades is very obvious. You have the power frequently to frustrate your adversary's intended motion, by making use of a counter, when he expected a simple parade; consequently you may execute your riposte on any other motion with a more probable certainty than if you had parried as the adversary expected.

Perhaps it will be here asked by those, who are little acquainted with the science, "Is it probable that a man will thrust "if he *expects* that he will be parried?" To which I answer, that "indeed it

" very often happens that a fencer will " thrust in *that* manner." But it is only scientific fencers who act thus. For instance (if you possess good judgement), you may disengage and thrust with the intention that the adversary should parry with tierce, and therefore, to return (while on your longe) a second thrust at him in *seconde*, or any other thrust that is deemed necessary on the occasion; but if the adversary parries *contrary* to your expectation, by a counter parade, &c. your premeditated thrust is completely frustrated; and if you are not sufficiently quick to parry his thrust from his counter parade, &c. you will most probably be hit. Hence you may perceive that this is another instance of the various snares and stratagems made use of between scientific fencers.

SEC. III.

On Deceiving the Counter Parades.

TO deceive those fencers who frequently have recourse to the counter parades, you must observe that you cannot do it by making the motions of the feints *one-two*, or *one-two-three*, or the *feint-seconde*, as your blades would on such occasions become entangled, and by that means prevent you from executing your premeditated motions with precision, vigour, and certainty. In order, therefore, to counteract or *deceive* a counter parade (it matters not which one), you must have recourse to *doubling twice*, which is performed in this manner. When your adversary forms a counter parade to your disengagement, you must disengage a *second*

time. The difference between the motions, or disengagements of the *double-twice*, and of the *one-two*, is, that in the motions of *one-two* you disengage alternately, on one side of the adversary's blade, and then return on the other, or opposite side, as you were at first; whereas the motions of *double-twice* consists in disengaging twice on the *same* side (at the time of the adversary forming the counter), the second disengagement being made precisely at the instant the adversary forms the circular motion for the counter parade.

Observe that, when you have occasion to double-twice, you should extend your sword-arm upon each motion, distinctly, upon the same principle as has been explained upon the motion for the feint *one-two*.

To *parry* the *double-twice*, your adversary

should in general, after having formed the counter parade, return as quick as possible to the simple parade, on the opposite side, whether in carte, tierce, or any other parade.

There is, however, on this subject, such a variety of methods practised to deceive one another upon the counter parades, that to give an account of them would be, if not totally impossible, at least quite perplexing to young practitioners; and if he possesses sufficient judgement to deceive the counter parades in the manner already described, he will be, in the course of practice, sufficiently competent to discover several other methods to counteract the counters without much instruction upon that head.

CHAP. IV.

SEC. I.

On the Flanconade.

THE motion of the flanconade is so called from its thrust being delivered at the *flank*. This motion is certainly very useful to adopt, particularly against a person who has a stiff arm, and it is also frequently of service against those who do not immediately recover after the delivery of a thrust, but is seldom practised on other occasions.

The flanconade is executed as follows :— Suppose your adversary to thrust carte in-

side of the arm, and that he remains on his longe, you having parried his thrust with *carte*. Now, as you are both in these positions, he on his longe, and you on your parade of carte; in this situation, you should *bind* with the *fort* of your blade, the *feeble* of your adversary's, by dropping the point of your blade under his wrist, and forcing his sword in this position, without quitting it, to the outside of the arm in the same position as of *octave*, when you will find yourself exactly in the same position as if you had *parried octave*; for your adversary being on his longe, your point will come straight to his body (if properly executed) and his sword will be found quite out of the line of your's, by reason of the opposition of your blade to his in octave.

This flanconade thrust cannot be well made use of, unless your antagonist re-

mains on his longe in carte inside, and you must likewise *feel* his blade after parrying carte, because if your parade throws his sword at a great distance from your body, you cannot, at that time, have recourse to the flanconade.

It is necessary in executing the flanconade, to keep the arm bent, in the same manner as you parry, and to straighten it after you have brought the adversary's blade out of the line of your body.

SEC. II.

Observations on the Utility of the Flanconade.

THE Flanconade thrust is undoubtedly a very serviceable motion to be practised against a person who employs much stiffness, or has a long arm, and does not recover after attacking, or if he has a longer sword than your's. For, admitting the strength of his sword arm is two or three times greater than your's, nevertheless the power of the *fort* of your blade against the feeble of the adversary's is such, that, if properly managed, he cannot *resist* the binding of his blade (flanconade) as the only thing he can do to counteract your flanconade is to *change* the position of his blade, which, if he does, you will find an opportunity

to make any kind of feint you may think necessary.

The old system of Fencing recommends to use the left hand, when you make the flanconade as an *opposition* to the adversary's blade from the line of your body. But this method is found by experience to be so very impracticable, as well as dangerous, to attempt, that to dwell upon its impropriety would be waste of time, which will appear evident after a little practice and observation.

With regard to the flanconade thrust being always made (as is the old custom) at the flank, I can see no reason for it to be done in that manner; it can full as well be delivered at the breast.

In conclusion of this subject I have to observe, that the flanconade is in general

a very aukward and harsh motion; it is seldom made use of between *elegant scientific fencers*, because in good Fencing, much *strength* is unnecessary, and is very often of great disadvantage, the flanconade being seldom used, except against a *stiff* arm, and those who fence with a stiff arm are by no means good fencers.

CHAP. V.

SEC. I.

On Feints.

TO make a *feint,* signifies to *deceive* your adversary. In Fencing, as well as the broad-sword, or any other science of self-defence, it is very often necessary to make a feint at your adversary, in order to succeed in hitting him with more effect and certainty, than could be done by any other method. This consists in making a motion (such as *one-two, one-two-three, feint-seconde,* &c.) as will make him *believe,* that you *intend* to thrust on one particular side, whereas your *intention* is to act quite the

reverse, in order to compel him to parry on the *opposite* side to that on which you had premeditated a thrust, and without the probability of its being counteracted.

Now to make these kind of motions, intended as feints, in a proper manner, and with judgement, constitutes the true science of using the sword, whether broad or small. For without this necessary *artifice* in action, were you of the greatest imaginable quickness, you will never be a complete scientific fencer.

It will be readily imagined that to pretend to give any *certain* directions to *deceive* the adversary would be impossible; as it depends on the *judgement alone*, which can only be directed as circumstances and situations occur in the assault, and strengthened by observations, practice, and reflection.

The only thing necessary to observe, is to caution the young practitioner, while making the motions, intended as feints, not to make them unnecessarily too wide, as he would be liable by such wide movements to leave his body exposed to receive, in the interim of his motion, a *time thrust*. But even this method of making the feints is not at *all times* observed, because, as fencing depends on artifice, you may chuse to make a wide motion, with the *intention* to receive your adversary's time thrust, in order that you may parry it, and consequently *force* a favourable opportunity to deliver the thrust you had thus premeditated; and which thrust, if your adversary is still more knowing than you, he will again likewise counteract your scheme. Thus you perceive that *snares* may be laid in various ways; and he, therefore, who possesses most *judgement* (we suppose the parties to be of equal courage, quickness, and vigour) in deceiving in this

this manner will, of course, be the best fencer.

Notwithstanding, however, what has been said on this subject, it will be proper to direct the young practitioner in what *manner* some of these motions, used as feints, may best be executed, in order to give them a more probable chance of succeeding; admitting, at the same time, that the adversary is not *aware* that the motion you make is intended as a *feint*. To explain this as clear as possible, without the foil in hand, we will begin by the *disengagement* in the following section.

SEC. II.

On the Disengagement.

TO disengage is simply to pass your blade on the other side of your adversary's (it is no matter whether within or over the arm) and to thrust. Now, supposing both parties to be of equal quickness, by doing nothing more than simply passing on the opposite side to thrust, the adversary is more *likely* to parry such an *artless* thrust than if you added to it a proper degree of stratagem in the execution of it. To deceive the adversary, therefore, in disengaging, your own judgement would lead you to make your antagonist *believe* that you *intend* to thrust straight forward (upon the same line), which is done by an extension of the arm; he, perceiving that motion, will and

must naturally form the parade to it (or else thrust upon the same line), in which case the moment he exposes his body on the opposite side, you take the opportunity, and then disengage quick and thrust.

To make this still more clear to the young practitioner, we will explain it differently.—Let us suppose the disengagement to be "*carte over the arm.*"—extend the arm so as to advance your point near his body, inclining, at the same time, the body a little forward, as if you had a design to thrust. The moment you perceive your adversary attempts to parry your sword, by turning his wrist to tierce, seize *that* instant to pass under (disengaging), and deliver your thrust as quick as you can.

By this artful method of disengaging, it is certainly more *probable* that you will hit, than if you had adopted the customary in-

significant method of disengaging, which is to pass your point, without any previous motion, as a feint, and to thrust.

You *may* succeed sometimes in simply disengaging in the old manner; but if you accustom yourself to that mode, you must depend solely on your *quickness*, for your adversary, *seeing* plainly your disengagement, at such a distance from his body, must indeed be uncommonly slow in his parade if you can always succeed in that manner. From which it may be concluded, that quickness is of little service unattended by a previous *stratagem*, and which will be more clearly perceived in the course of the work.

SEC. III.

On the Feint One-Two.

THIS feint consists of nothing more than two motions, by *disengaging twice* alternately, and is executed on the same principle of *deceiving* the adversary as in the disengagement. For instance, if I make my first disengagement by *advancing* my point (*i. e.* an extension of the arm) as near to my adversary's body as possible, he *must form* his parade, as he supposes my *design* is to disengage only, (or else I touch on that first disengagement). At the instant, therefore, I perceive him turn his wrist, I seize the moment he expects to strike my blade, and by that opening which I compelled him to make on the other side, I deliver my thrust therein as quick as possible.

To succeed in making the *one-two* without the above *artifice*, would be almost impossible against a moderately good fencer. Because the adversary has no occasion to answer (*i. e.* to form the necessary parade) to the first disengagement, as it can be of no effect in consequence of its not *deceiving* him; he may, therefore, parry the second disengagement with the greatest ease, if steady upon his legs. Nor can these two motions be properly called a *feint*, as they neither deceive or surprise a steady cool fencer, who knows what fencing consists of.

SEC. IV.

On the Feint One-Two-Three.

THIS feint is also made precisely on the same principle as those last mentioned, and is only adding another disengagement to the *one-two*, *i. e.* disengaging three times, and by extending the arm upon each motion, as was explained in the *one-two*. Indeed *all* feints are performed on the above principle, with this observation premised, and which naturally follows.—That it is evident that the motions intended for the *feint* itself is not, as is frequently imagined, to be made always *quick*, for this reason—if, for instance, on the feint *one-two* I make my second motion *before* I have perceived you to answer my *first*, I shall certainly be no forwarder than if I

had remained as I was before I made the first, let me make the motions ever so quick, because I return to the *same* situation where I found your blade at the time I began my *first* motion. It is therefore certain that quickness is only necessary at the *last* motion, that is, *at the time* of making the thrust, let the motion of a feint be what it may. In fact, all motions should be made in such a manner as will most effectually *deceive* the adversary, remembering, at the same time, that they should not in general be made too *wide*, unless you are sufficiently *on guard* to parry a time thrust.

It has been frequently observed by young beginners, that if the adversary parries the *one-two-three* feint, "would "it not be natural to make *one-two-three-* "*four*, &c." to which I observe, in answer, that by making so many motions you

leave your body much *exposed* to a *time* thrust, unless, indeed, you are sufficiently artful to make it as a *snare*, in order to parry, and to make the riposte, or return with certainty. It is, undoubtedly, possible to take the time on the *one-two*, or *one-two-three*, and on the disengagements, but in general to do this on such motions requires much judgement, and is very hazardous, unless you have great practice, by reason of those motions being made small, occupying but *little time*, and by *gaining* on the body each time of making the motions, *compelling* the adversary to form his parade accordingly.

CHAP. VI.

SEC. I.

Feint Seconde.

THIS motion is on the same principle, with regard to deceiving the adversary, as is the feint *one-two*, and its motions are executed nearly in the same manner. Thus, after parrying tierce, or prime, upon the adversary's disengagement of carte over the arm, you make your *first* motion by passing the point in the same position as you parried, under his wrist (*i. e.* disengaging) but *without* thrusting, in order to compel him to parry quinte or seconde; which, when he has formed, you return

your point *over* his arm and deliver your thrust in the position of carte. This feint forms *two* motions similar to the *one-two*, the difference consisting only in *turning* your wrist in the *first* motion.

SEC. II.

On the Beating the Blade.

TO *beat* the blade, according to the old system, means to parry firm and smartly on your adversary's sword, in order to throw it sufficiently out of the line of your body, so as to enable you to touch him before he has time to recover his blade to parry.

There is another kind of beat, which is executed with the *feeble* of your blade against the *fort* of your adversary's, by *tapping* it only, not with the intention of throwing it at a distance from the line of your body, but with the idea of *causing* him to make a motion that you have predetermined to counteract. To make this

subject more plain, let us suppose that we are on guard together, and that I am *aware* that you expect me to make a disengagement, a feint one-two, &c. and that you are prepared in your mind to parry my motion: now, if I possess more judgement than you, I shall anticipate the snare you have laid for me; instead, therefore, of acting according to your expectation, my making a sudden dry beat (but not too violently) on your blade, I shall, most probably, entirely discompose your premeditated schemes, and by accompanying my beat with a feint, &c. I shall, by means of this *unexpected* motion, compel you to fall into *my* snare, instead of my falling into *your's*. I hope no one will pretend to say that this, as well as what has been said before relative to the feints one-two, &c. would not be fencing with *judgement*, and according to the true science of sword-defence. In order to dis-

tinguish the former method of beating the blade with that of the latter, we may, for the sake of distinction, call the first *striking the blade*, and the other simply *beating the blade*.

SEC. III.

On the Striking the Blade.

THE striking the blade is sometimes practised with the intention of throwing the adversary's blade at a sufficient distance from the line of your body, so that you may be enabled to deliver a thrust *before* he has time to recover himself to the necessary parade. It is performed in several situations; as for instance, supposing we are on guard together, if I imagine you are not aware of my intention, I may, with this smart sudden jirk from my wrist, strike your blade in such a manner as will leave your body quite exposed to my command, which will enable me to hit you before you can have time to recover to a proper parade. To attempt the exe-

cution of this motion, you must be sufficiently "*on your guard*," to be ready in case you are *deceived* (which is done by his disengaging at the instant you are attempting to strike his blade) to return to your own proper parade, otherwise you are inevitably touched, by reason of the great opening you leave your body in if you happen to miss his blade. There is also much *artifice* in executing this motion, for you may *pretend* to strike it, in order that the adversary should disengage, and then be so prepared (that is, *on guard*) as to act accordingly. Here, again, you see no motion is, or should be made, without a *previous intention*. The striking of the blade is performed in general from carte, tierce, and quinte positions. They cannot so well be performed from the circle, octave, or prime, by reason of the position of your wrist preventing its having the proper power and command of your adversary's

blade, which is necessary. But the most favourable opportunity of making this motion is, when your adversary keeps his arm extended or stiff, especially if he has the point of his blade below the horizontal line of his wrist, and more especially if you imagine that he is not *aware* of your intention to do it. I think the most effectual mode of executing the beat, is in general from the position of carte; thus, to strike the blade with the *fort* of your's against his *feeble*, at the same instant turning your wrist, and forcing his blade out to the position of your quinte parade, but all in *one motion*. It certainly requires some practice to do this nicely. I do not therefore, recommend this motion to be adopted by young beginners, as it is apt to give rise to bad habits, making them employ *force* when there is no occasion, and which they are too apt to do at all times. Good fencers only do it, and that but sel-

dom. Observe, that in striking the blade, if it happens to fall from your adversary's hand *before* you deliver your thrust, you ought not to make your hit *afterwards*; on the contrary, immediately pick up his foil and deliver it politely to him, asking pardon for the unintended disarmament; because the motion is not made with *that* intention; it being only to make a convenient and *fair* opening. If, however, the foil falls at the *same time* of touching him, then it is not your fault, because you are not obliged to know that it *will* fall to the ground, as he might do so on purpose to *prevent* your thrust.

SEC. IV.

On the Appel.

THE Appel is a motion made with the right foot while on the position of the guard, by making a firm smart stamp or two, so that this sudden movement, which your adversary perhaps does not expect, may be the means of deranging his premeditated motion, and probably oblige him to make the motion you wished, and thence to take the advantage as the occasion offers.

Observe, that in making the appel or stamp, that it should be done upon a firm, steady position of the guard, and without moving the body; because, if your body is in motion, it will prevent your execut-

ing with proper effect. It is only in this motion that it is necessary to have the body *wholly* supported on the left leg. You must, therefore, when you wish to stamp, incline your body a little back on your left, after which resume your usual *firm* position of the guard, at the time of executing your intended motion.

SEC. V.

Pressing the Blade.

PRESSING the blade is to *lean* with the foil on that of your adversary's, in order that he should be tempted to disengage, or to make any other motion which you are, in your *mind*, prepared to parry, or to deceive, so that by this stratagem you may *lead* him into the situation you had predetermined. These, and various small motions made without longing, are termed *false attacks*, which are explained in the next section.

SEC. VI.

On False Attacks.

THESE motions are made in order to compel your adversary to attack you contrary to his intention, and thence leads him to fall into your snares, and enables you to execute your intended motion accordingly, and with more effect. All these false attacks, such as pressing the blade, disengaging, *one-two*, *one-two-three*, *feint-seconde*, &c. should be performed upon a firm steady position of the guard, and without the least embarrassment. The execution of these motions scientifically, requires several *practical* lessons, and the success of them requires some knowledge of the theory, which may be acquired by

oral instruction, *observation*, and *reflection*, assisted by a proper degree of practice. These qualities properly combined, constitute the *complete amateur*.

CHAP. VII.

SEC. I.

On the Time Thrust.

TIME is the duration of any motion, being so called because it affords the most favourable opportunity of thrusting, the adversary being unable, during one action, to do a contrary one.

If we were to follow the exact term of time, every thing that is done in fencing might be called so; for you should never thrust but when you have a favourable opportunity of hitting, nor parry but at the time that favours you to oppose the

enemy's sword, nor make an engagement, or a feint, but to take the time upon the motion that your action occasions in your adversary.

To *take the time,* is making your thrust by a judicious discernment on the motion of your adversary, taking him by a different one, so that you may hit him the moment he *intended* to have hit you. To do this with safety requires some practice, and much *judgement,* and those who have arrived to this degree of perfection of executing time thrusts with "*connoisance,*" are truly denominated *real scientific Fencers* of the first rate.

There are numberless occasions on which you may "*take the time,*" which depends entirely on your adversary's motions, and which your *judgement* alone is capable of discovering. However, I will

endeavour to give you a general idea on the subject. For this purpose, *one* motion alone will be sufficient; suppose that, for instance, I disengage and thrust carte, and that I remain on my longe. Now if you disengage, after having parried me, to touch me *before* I recover, you will, by that motion, leave your body totally uncovered, consequently I take the opportunity of putting in my thrust at the time you intended to hit me with your disengagement.

To take the time in this manner is quite *safe*, because your disengagement, being in carte *over* the arm, is parried or opposed, from the line of my body, by reason of the situation of my arm, my foil being on your body, and your's *over* my arm.

To take the time in this manner when your adversary thrusts *inside*, is almost im-

possible, because you cannot *oppose* your blade to his and hit at the same instant, in consequence of the unfavourable situation of both your bodies. In this case, however, the old system directs you to *volte*, *i. e.* turning your body on one side, and on one leg while thrusting; but this is so extremely ridiculous and impracticable, setting aside its great *danger*, that to dwell upon its absurdity would be waste of time; suffice it to say that those who practice this quackery with a good Fencer, will be hit every time he attempts it.

To direct in what manner you should take the time *judiciously* on every occasion, would be utterly impossible, and indeed, it frequently happens, even between good fencers, that they often fail in its execution, owing to the design being premeditated, or otherwise. For this reason I would not recommend, young beginners

especially, the too frequent practice of timing their adversary, because they will render their modes of play not only very disagreeable to each other, but it will also be attended with some danger, as the foils are liable to break on these "*coups pour coups*," setting aside also the bad habits it leads to, which are ever after difficult to break.

Observe, that no time thrust is good if you are hit at the *same* time, and to avoid which you should generally take the time when the adversary thrusts *over* the arm, observing to oppose your blade to that side on which he might have hit you with his thrust, and by this opposition his foil will necessarily pass by the *side* of your body.

CHAP. VIII.

SEC. I.

On the Disarm.

EVERY body knows that to disarm your adversary, signifies to force with your blade his sword out of his hand, in order to run him through the body effectually, without danger to yourself. Many persons believe that to do this properly is the *soul* of Fencing; and scarcely a week passes but some one or other asks me to teach them this wonderful motion, because (say they) "provided I know how to do "this, I care for no man." How much these good folks are surprized when they

hear the following observation on the subject!—Of all the motions made use of in fencing that of attempting to disarm your adversary is the most dangerous, especially if he properly understands what fencing is.

To prove generally that the knowledge of the disarm is of no use *sword in hand*, you have only to remember that to every sword is attached a sword-knot, the use of which is, that, in a serious affair, you may *tie* your sword round your wrist, in order to keep it firm, and to prevent its escape from the grasp of your hand. Even admitting your sword is by chance deprived of its usual appendage, you have only to take your handkerchief as a substitute.—Surely these observations are sufficiently valid to shew the futility of talking about disarming. However, we will now suppose that neither of the above cir-

cumstances take place, and that the swords are held respectively by each adversary loose in the hand, without any fastening whatever; now, in this case, of all the motions made in fencing, the attempt to disarm is the most hazardous, especially if your adversary is a good swordsman, because to do it you must employ *force* in striking his blade with your's, and if, at the instant of making the motion to force his blade from his hand, he passes under your wrist, you must unavoidably leave your body quite exposed, in consequence of the force you employed; which will prevent you from returning quickly to the necessary parade.

With foil in hand might also be shewn several situations wherein to attempt to disarm would be attended with the greatest danger, and after all that has been said on the subject, supposing it were easy to dis-

arm your adversary, and that it was not customary to *fix* the sword in the hand, would it be *honourable*, would it be *fair*, to *assassinate* him, because he happened to lose his sword from his grasp? With as great propriety you might run him through the body before he is on the position of the guard.—It is unnecessary to expatiate any longer on this subject.—Every reflecting and honorable mind must perceive its impropriety. Is it not, therefore, a shame for those who pretend to teach the art of using the sword, to impose on the credulity of their pupils in this manner, by teaching them such nonsense, to say the least of it? It must be either attributed to their ignorance of the art itself, or to their knavery.

Some teach the disarm, by taking hold of the adversary's arm, and *forcing* the sword out of his hand when he is on his longe, or to seize the blade with both

hands; others tell you to seize with your left hand the shell of your adversary's sword, and at the same instant to pass your blade behind your back, and to thrust your sword in that position into his body, and many more ridiculous things. All this is mere quackery, (there are *quacks* in fencing as in most other professions,) though it may, perhaps, have a dazzling appearance before ignorant spectators, or the young pupil. Not even with foil in hand should you attempt to disarm your adversary; though, I do not say that you should not attempt to strike his blade with your's, by a jirk of the wrist, provided you have sufficient command of your blade to return to a proper parade, in case you are deceived; because, if he is not aware of your intention, you may probably throw his foil at a sufficient distance from the line of your body, to enable you to deliver a thrust with effect, and provided also that this

thrust is made at the moment you strike the blade; because, as I before said, if his foil happened to fall *before* you touch him, you have no right to reckon it as good. *(See striking the blade.)*

CHAP. IX.

SEC. I.

On the Origin of "Carte *and* Tierce."

As most persons, who profess to have a knowledge of fencing, know that it is the practice, previously to making an assault, to "*Thrust Carte and Tierce*;" yet, I have every reason to believe, by the many enquiries I have made of numberless scholars I have had from different fencing masters, that the *origin* (consequently the *real utility*) of the practice is but little known amongst these *amateurs*. In order, therefore, to set them right on this subject, I will endeavour

to explain its origin, by which means its *utility* will readily appear.

It was formerly the custom in all fencing academies in Paris, previously to the scholars fencing together, or before taking their lessons, to "*Tirer à la Muraille*"—"Thrust at the wall," which was *literally* the practice, in order to take off the stiffness usually felt at the commencement of fencing. Every one knows that this is the case at the beginning of any bodily exercise. The scholars, therefore, used to longe at the wall for a short time, by which means they rendered themselves sufficiently supple, and consequently better disposed for exercise. Hence it appears that nature herself dictated this practice. Hence follows, that "*thrusting at the wall*" was considered as an almost indispensable prelude to fencing, and, as might be expected, the *manner* of executing it was, in course of

time, improved upon. It was *well* suggested by some of the masters of that time, that it would be better for those who would wish to fence together, *after* they had acquired some knowledge of the positions, to agree to supple themselves by means of simple disengagement *only*, within and without the arm alternately, and without the intention of hitting each other. When one of them had sufficiently suppled himself in thrusting, the other, of course, took his turn in the same manner. By this mutual agreement the practice was more agreeable to the parties, than for each of them to thrust alone at a dead wall. After this alteration in the manner of suppling the body, the appellation of "*Tirer à la Muraille*"—"*Thrust at the Wall*," was changed to the more appropriate one of "*Tirer Carte et Tierce*"—"*Thrust Carte and Tierce.*"

SEC. II.

On the Utility of Carte and Tierce.

PERHAPS few persons can conceive the great benefit arising from the frequent practice of *carte and tierce* in the manner above stated, which may be truly called the *emblem of fencing*. The advantage derived from this elegant display of the positions of fencing (the foundation from which all the motions necessary for deceiving your adversary are made) is of considerable service for making the assault in a proper manner, some of which advantages are these :—

1st. It gives you a proper command of the foil, by making the disengagements with a just precision, enabling you thereby

to direct your point with certainty to your adversary's breast.

2d. You contract a proper stability on the position of your guard, as also on that of your longe, which are the foundations for the execution of all your motions with the foil in the assault.

3d. Your parades of carte and tierce, which are more often necessary in the assault than any other, become more accurate and agreeable to the just principles of fencing.

4th. You are by this frequent regular longeing better able to ascertain the proper distance to hit your adversary when in the assault.

In fact, by the frequent practice of thrusting *carte and tierce*, in a proper man-

ner, you will acquire not only an elegant "*tout ensemble*" in fencing, but likewise an effectual method of executing whatever motion is necessary in the assault.

I do not see any necessity for explaining minutely in what manner the positions of carte and tierce are made. Those who have had half a dozen lessons ought to know it; and to those who never had a practical lesson it would be perplexing them to no purpose; besides, it is not to those persons, who have not acquired the *mere* positions under a master, that this work is principally directed, for "*Carte and Tierce*" is only a simple, but elegant display of the *positions* of fencing.

SEC. III.

Observations on Carte and Tierce.

PERHAPS it will not be amiss to inform the unexperienced fencer that many persons, even those who consider themselves finished fencers, are very apt, when parrying *carte and tierce*, to vary from the usual parades made upon this occasion. For instance, instead of parrying simply *carte*, which is *naturally* expected, when you disengage within the arm, the kind of persons alluded to will, instead of carte, make use of the counter in tierce, or prime, and perhaps the half circle, &c. varying the parades according to their fancy every time you disengage. This manner is not right, and shews very little knowledge of the true science. It is the means of rendering

the person who longes very unpleasant and unsteady, and is often the occasion of his positions appearing, to the spectators, without firmness, and, therefore, inelegant, on account of his being parried contrary to his expectation, which was that of being parried *carte* and *tierce*, and *nothing* else ; and it has altogether a very confused appearance. This is not all ; the person who takes this liberty, according to his fancy, makes himself, in the eyes of *sensible* amateurs, appear very affected, shewing how *cleverly* he parries *all* the parades, as well as the *impropriety* of it ; because he is previously understood to parry *only carte* and *tierce*, and therefore not justified in parrying according to his own pleasure. Another thing very necessary to observe is, that at no time should you endeavour to *touch* your adversary while thrusting carte and tierce, unless you both make that agreement to touch *before* falling on the position of the

guard. Nothing appears so ridiculous as to see a person try to touch while thrusting *carte and tierce*. In fact, with a stranger, it is an insult to attempt it. *Carte and tierce* is not intended for *hitting* (see its origin), nor should you shew the least *inclination* to do it. Even admitting your adversary by accident should miss his parade, it is no more than a becoming politeness to ask pardon, in case you had hit him unintentionally. You should do nothing more than what is *literally* understood by *carte and tierce*, and endeavour to effect this without the least appearance of affectation, or wishing to render the person you exercise with unpleasant.

The above remarks are understood to apply to those who meet to fence without any knowledge of each other. Those who are in the habit of fencing frequently together, may in this respect do as they

think proper, provided it be by *mutual consent*. Yet I would not recommend it to be done at any time; as, in my opinion, it is of *no use*. If you wish to hit, it is as well to thrust at *all-feints*, or make the assault at once.

There is another thing also very necessary to observe, which I had almost forgotten; that is, with regard to the *taking of the distance*, or *measure*, in beginning carte and tierce; where it is the custom, before you make the salute, to measure your proper distance, which every body knows who has the least knowledge of fencing; but many persons on this occasion, as well as on others in fencing, execute it in a very improper manner. It is almost needless to observe, that the intention of taking the measure is *only* to ascertain if you can conveniently *reach* your adversary upon the longe. Yet

many persons need this simple information, because they are frequently guilty of the greatest piece of ill manners in the execution of it. As it is customary at the time of falling on guard with the body open, to pay each other the compliment of asking which shall thrust first; it follows, that whoever takes this, the other must, of course, remain on the position of his guard, for the adversary to take his measure upon him. Now it is very natural to imagine, that if you have the politeness to ask your adversary to supple himself on you first, that when you have opened your body for him to take his distance, he certainly would not do it by *hitting* you, as it would be quite sufficient for him to take his measure, by thrusting with the point of his blade at the *side* of your body? Yet I have seen this done several times, and it has happened to me very often, that when I have asked a

stranger to thrust *carte and tierce* with me, I have, as is usual, opened my body for him to take his measure, which he would very politely do, without even returning the compliment of asking me to thrust first, by giving me, to my great astonishment, a violent thrust on my ribs, which, had I been aware of, I should, as I took the liberty of telling them, not have stood like a statue to receive such a harsh compliment.

Undoubtedly such an inconsistency must be attributed rather to *ignorance* of the art, than to the intent of *insult*. The thing speaks for itself: it cannot be imagined, but by the most ignorant of the art, that if I allow you to measure your longe on me, that you should *hit* me. This is much more ridiculous than even the trying to hit while thrusting in *carte and tierce*.—I hope I have here said enough to shew the great impropriety of this practice.

Note.—Although I have recommended in Fencing (*i. e.* the assault) that you should generally parry with the arm *bent*, (see page 21,) yet as *carte and tierce* is a *mutual agreement* between the parties, and that you are, consequently, certain in not being *deceived* by a feint in your parade, you may parry with an *extension* of the arm, observing that at the moment your adversary passes his point, that you *first* strike his *feeble* with you *fort*, and at the same time *extending* your arm, by which means you will slide along his blade and quit it at about the middle. This may be allowed in *carte and tierce*, because it has rather a more elegant appearance, and there is *no danger* resulting from it.

CHAP. X.

SEC. I.

On the Salute in Fencing.

THIS piece of ceremony previously to making an assault, has always been deemed necessary to be observed in all the Fencing Academies in Europe, not only because the exercise of arms requires, at all times, the greatest politeness, but as a respect due to the beholders, and a mutual civility between the gentlemen who fence; on which account it should never be dispensed with.

Almost every master has unfortunately a different method of teaching the salute.

It is, however, greatly to be desired that the same manner of saluting should be *generally* adopted. The salute is certainly in itself of no essential service to the progress of the scholar in the *science* of fencing, it is but a mere ceremonious prelude, and if the *same manner* of saluting were adopted by every fencer, there would not arise that aukward and confused jumble of motions which two scholars of different masters are very liable to make when they meet to fence.

If proper reflections on the art had been made by the generality of fencing masters, this small matter might, at least, have been remedied. And, indeed, the person making his salute in a different way to the other, is frequently the means that neither of them even make their own salute in the manner they had been taught, consequently both of them appear aukward in

having attempted what they were unable to perform; and admitting they happen to do it right, according to each others method, their different positions have a very incongruous appearance. It is, if I may use the comparison, as disagreeable as a regiment marching without keeping the step, or a part of it presenting arms in a different manner to the other.

If I may be permitted to recommend a fencing salute to be *generally* adopted, the following appears the least complicated, has an elegant appearance, and is easily performed and remembered :—

1st. Being on the usual position of the guard, (the body being supported, on that occasion, on the left leg) make twice appel (two stamps) with the right foot, but without any other motion of the body.

2d. Bring the ancle of the right foot to the back of your left heel, at the same time raising your right wrist as high as possible, the arm being extended, and with the point of the sword facing your adversary's body.

3d. From this position bring your left foot behind to the usual position of the guard, as you were at first.

4th. Stamp twice again, and in that same position of the guard salute *distinctly* in carte first, and tierce afterwards, extending your arm easily upon each motion, in the same manner as in parrying *carte and tierce* previously to the assault.

5th. From the above position of tierce bring your sword gracefully to your side, at the same time bringing your left foot up in front to the right, all in one motion.

6th, and lastly. From this position (the sword being by your side) present yourself with an elegant animated appearance on your original position of the guard, at a good distance from the adversary.

Remark.—As it is understood when you salute, that it is a compliment you pay to the company, you should, while forming the parade of carte, turn your face to the spectators, and the same also when you salute on the opposite side to tierce, otherwise it would be like a man bowing to another with his face turned a contrary way.

SEC. II.

Observation on the Salute.

ALTHOUGH I have directed that in saluting you should, in general, do it in *carte first*, and tierce *afterwards*; nevertheless, there are occasions were it will be proper to *begin* by *tierce*, and to pass your sword from *carte*. For admitting I were to fence before a large company, in which there happened to be one person of superior rank to the rest, and to whom I ought to shew greater respect than to any of the rest, and supposing this distinguished person should be on my *right* hand at the time I am on guard, it is natural to suppose that I should, out of greater respect than to the rest, salute him on my right hand *before* I salute those on my *left*. But,

admitting the company to be all of an equal rank, and that you are indifferent whom you salute first, it would be better to begin as at first recommended, because the passing of the sword to the left side from the position of tierce, has rather a more open and elegant appearance than passing it from carte.

Note.—It used to be formerly the custom to fence with hats on, and to take them off at the time of saluting in carte and tierce; this practice, however, has been abolished some time since, as being cumbersome, and totally unnecessary. Yet there are, I believe, still some masters so attached to the old system, that although their pupils do not actually fence with hats on, still they will teach them to make the *motion* of taking off the hat, by touching the head with the left hand, to imitate it; and secondly, another similar

motion to put it on.—I cannot conceive this to be of any use, or that it possesses any additional *elegance*; but as this is a matter of no *great consequence*, it may be left to the option of the amateur.

SEC. III.

On the Salute previous to thrusting Carte and Tierce.

THE salute of *carte* and *tierce* is practised on the same principle, with regard to its politeness, as has been treated on when speaking of the grand fencing salute for the assault. The only difference, in performing it, consists in its being made with fewer motions. It is, however, equally graceful, and should never be dispensed with at the time of *carte* and *tierce*.

In this salute also, some fencers make their positions in a way different from others, which has likewise a confused appearance. The proper method is thus:

1st. Being on the position of the guard, and supposing it is agreed that you are to thrust first, take the distance by a longe at the side of the body (see page 85).

2d. From the position of the longe, recover with the body upright, without stiffness, both heels together, the right wrist being raised as much as possible, and with the point of the sword facing the adversary's body.

3d. In the above position salute both in carte and in tierce distinctly, as in the other salute, after which fall on the position of the guard as usual.

CHAP. XI.

SEC. I.

On Thrusting at All-Feints.

THOUGH it is absolutely necessary to begin the Art of Fencing by way of lesson, and to continue it for some time, in order that practice, growing to a habit, may give liberty to the different parts of the body to form themselves; nevertheless, however well you may take your lessons, some other means are necessary to make an assault well, than those which the master gives at his plastron.

When you have acquired a thorough fa-

miliarity with the positions, the different parades, accompanied by their different thrusts, and also the motions of some of the principle feints, &c. without being obliged to be corrected, you should, either with the master or one of his pupils, practise by mutual agreement on him what you have already been taught, which he should endeavour to parry *only*, and not to return the attack upon you. By this method, such as making small disengagements, appels, half thrusts, &c. nearly in the same manner as has been treated of under the head of *False Attacks*, you may discern the motions your action causes in the adversary, and, by not fearing the riposte upon you, it will render your mode of attack more precise, effectual, and according to the just principles of fencing, than if you immediately hurried to the usual assault. After you have done this for some time, you should *parry* all-feints. (*See next Sect.*)

SEC. II.

On the Parrying of All-Feints.

THIS is, *vice versa*, the same as thrusting at all-feints; which practice is also equally attended with great advantage, as you will acquire a certain and familiar manner of forming the parades. A fortnight's practice in *parrying and thrusting at all-feints*, under the inspection of a good master, who should explain the probable *consequences* of the different situations, &c. in which you may find yourselves, will be (when added to the lessons) the proper routine of instruction for becoming an *elegant scientific fencer*.

Observe, that while at this practice both of you should remain all the time at the proper distance, so that you can but just

touch each other, which may be done by keeping the left foot firm and steadily fixed, flat on the ground; observe also, that when your adversary *parries* all-feints, you must not deliver a second thrust immediately after, while on the longe, because, admitting your adversary parries your *first* thrust, it is without the intention of riposting—an advantage given you which would probably be prevented in the regular mode of attack and defence.

I cannot conclude this subject without strongly recommending the practice of *parrying and thrusting at all-feints,* as the benefit arising from it would be very considerable, and the advantage soon perceived by the learner.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

On the Assault.

TO make an assault, or as it is sometimes called "*to play loose*," is the imitation of two adversaries, one defending, and the other endeavouring to preserve his life, which the moderns term "*fencing*."

From what has already been said with regard to the best *mode* of executing the chief movements in fencing, little more can be expected upon that subject, because, I hope, it will clearly appear that *no regular mathematical rules* can be given

for defending or attacking with *certainty* upon *all* occasions, either with the foil or sword in hand; for the motions which have been explained are varied in their execution, according as you have to act with different kind of fencers; for instance, upon the motions of the feint *one-two*, it is generally the custom to make it *small*; now, if the adversary forms a *wide* parade to the *first* motion of the feint, it will be necessary also to make your motions wide, otherwise it will be by *chance* if you hit him, and that not without entangling within the blades; and for the same reason you must likewise parry wide, in case his motions are wide; hence it follows that it is your *judgement*, on those occasions, which must direct you to act in the manner you perceive most to your advantage.

The only direction which the young

practitioner should remember, is (after he has acquired the necessary firm position of the body, as well as the most consistent methods of executing the different motions of the foil with precision and flexibility) to keep his *mind* continually on the watch (while on the position of the guard), observing every motion the adversary makes, and to endeavour to penetrate by his action in what manner he intends to deliver his thrust, and to judge what motion should be made to counteract him accordingly, without the risk of being hit at the same time, or even to have your motion anticipated.

It must be well understood, that it is not the motions of the body, or of the foil, which constitute the *science* of fencing, although by performing them in general, as hasbe en recommended, they are the *means* which enable you to succeed with greater

probability in hitting oftner than by making them according to the old method. For to fence according to *stated*, *regular* motions, that is, having a fixed *routine* of movements, to be used *precisely* in the same way with *all* kind of fencers, without any *variation* in the manner of executing them, would be nothing more than mere *mechanical fencing*, acting like an automaton; and by no means the way to use your sword *scientifically*. Were you to execute all the different parades and other motions in fencing, even in the nicest manner possible, if you do not possess a proper degree of *artifice*, *subtilty*, and *stratagem*, in the execution of them, it is certain you have not acquired the true science; without which, *if* you do succeed sometimes in hitting, it is by *chance*, or by force, or both together; but you must not imagine that it is likely to succeed, even in that way, against a person who well under-

stands the theory, both parties having equal courage.

There is the same kind of judgement necessary to be used in fencing well, as there is for a good general to understand the art of tactics ; for if, with his army in the field of battle, he performs an evolution, with the intention that the enemy should perceive it, in order that he may make one which the general had premeditated, he thereby *deceives* the enemy, who falls in the *snare*; and it is consequently very probable that he will lose the battle.

There is assuredly much greater *merit* in conquering by such a *mental artifice,* in addition to the dexterity of bodily motions, precise movements, and natural courage, than by depending solely upon the latter, but least qualities. Our inveterate enemy is said to play, in his mind, at Chess, when

in the field, so likewise do scientifical fencers, when opposite each other, sword or foil in hand; and although the combination of ideas is not so extensive, as in Chess, yet there is precisely the same manner of reasoning previously to the making any motion with the foil; for instance, if I make a disengagement, what will be the advantage? what will my adversary do in *consequence* to annoy me? what other motion can I have recourse to, that he is not aware of, to defend myself from his attack? In the same manner should you reason with regard to the positions, of the body as with the foil. If you *incautiously* put yourself into a bad and dangerous position, you must take the consequence of your rashness, unless it be intended, by way of *snare*, for the adversary to make a movement that will enable you to counteract it with advantage to yourself.

The *practical* part alone of Fencing consists but of a few motions of the body and of the foil, and must, if unattended in the execution of them, with *artifice*, &c. be very uninteresting. The want of understanding this principle is the reason that Fencing is so frequently misconstrued, and consequently not so generally appreciated as it ought to be. On that account it is also, that only a very few persons, in this country especially, have attained to any degree of eminence in the art; and this circumstance arises principally from the very few masters there are who know little more than the mere positions of the body, (and those not properly) their scholars consequently acquire but a smattering of Fencing, and therefore frequently discontinue taking lessons after a month or two; they being taught scarcely any thing else but a *repetition* of the same motions, in the manner of the alphabet, and even that foolish routine of instruction is unat-

tended by proper and *convincing* explanations of the *utility* and *consequence* of each respective motion. The scholars, of course, in a very short time, either imagine that they are *complete amateurs*, having arrived at the end of their lesson, which they have learnt like a parrot, or find little pleasure in such a kind of regular bodily labour, which may be justly called an uninteresting jumble of motions, which a ploughman could perform in half a dozen lessons.

Now, if on the contrary, the pupil is taught to *reason*, to be shewn that no motion is made in fencing without a *previous* motive, and to exercise his *judgement* in the same manner as if he were taught the game of draughts or chess, *then* would the Art of Fencing become interesting, not only as a very *pleasing* amusement, but at the same time of *real utility*, and we should

consequently find in a short time that fencing would become much more in fashion than any other gymnastic exercise; and I will venture to affirm, that if properly understood and attended to, it would be found *indispensibly* necessary (as it was considered in France in the enlightened age of Lewis the XIVth.) for every person to acquire some knowledge of, as being a most healthy amusement, as well as giving a proper confidence of your being able to defend yourself on any serious occasion; and, in fact, deriving such advantages from its practice, as Mons. Danet has justly described in his treatise on the art, an extract of which is given in my introduction.

Perhaps from what has been here said on the art, it may be imagined that to fence scientifically, in the manner here described, requires great genius and capa-

city, and that, therefore, it is not *every* person that can attain to such an excellence in the art. To which it may be answered, that in some respects this observation may be just; for if a person be naturally of a dull and hebetated imagination, he will never become very eminent in the art, or if he has any bodily failing, such as lameness, he cannot become a great *practical fencer*, although by observing and *reflecting* he may become a good *connoisseur*. But to suppose that for persons who possess their natural ordinary faculties alone, it requires particular attention, or intense application, to arrive to that degree of perfection as will enable you to amuse and defend yourself, foil in hand, with credit and satisfaction with any person, even of the first rate, (although you may nevertheless be in the end beaten) is a great mistake. If you possess a proper share of common sense, and make use of it accord-

ingly, the theory may be acquired as soon, or sooner than the theory of the game of draughts, the only difference of which consists in the *practical* part, which the more you attend to, the more perfect will be your knowledge of the theory, as will readily appear from your advance in the art.

Note.—As there are several questions which might naturally be made on the foregoing subject, they will be best answered under the head of "*Erroneous Opinions*," at the end of the Work.

CHAP. II.

On Quickness.

QUICKNESS is the shortness of time between the beginning and end of a motion, whether it be in delivering the thrust, or in forming the necessary parade. It proceeds from regular and frequent exercise of the parts of the body, joined with a good disposition; that is to say, vigour and suppleness combined; which form *quickness*. Quickness in Fencing is so essentially necessary, that without this quality, it is very difficult to defend or attack: this quality is so well known, that every one is desirous of it, though most people are ignorant of the means of acquiring it.

Undoubtedly, quickness in Fencing is so

necessary, that without it you would find it very difficult to defend, and almost impossible to attack. But this quickness is often confounded with precipitate and consecutive thrusts, without considering that precipitation is either when the body moves before the hand, or when an improper motion is made; and the consecutive thrusts, the pushing several times without interval, or when there is no occasion; which may be done by any one who is not quick, because quickness is only the shortness of time between the beginning and end of an action. That this quickness is any thing uncommon in the generality of scholars, is a mistake, as frequent practice, and a good disposition, under the direction of a good theoretical teacher, will produce this necessary vigour and suppleness of body, which gives a *free* motion to the wrist, and altogether produces a proper degree of quickness.

But it often happens in Fencing, that a too great quickness in executing some of the motions, is attended with the greatest disadvantage, especially against a cool, steady, and intrepid fencer. For this reason, the *steady* fencer remains in a *firm* position, with his mind *prepared* (that is, "*on guard*") to receive the attack of these kind of precipitate fencers, which will very often give you the opportunity of taking the time upon your adversary, and also by parrying upon a firm position, you will have the riposte with ease, and with almost a certainty. Without *precision* in the making of the motions, and judgement, quickness is of no use; for it is in straight thrusts, (that is the last motion previously to longeing) and chiefly in the ripostes, that quickness is mostly necessary, which, as I have already said, will be soon enough acquired by a proper mode of practice.

CHAP. III.

On the good effects of a nice Discernment of the Sight.

IN fencing there is the foreseen and the unforeseen. The *foreseen* is the effect of the understanding and the will, and the unforeseen is the effect of the discernment of the eye, and of custom, which being upheld by these means, has no sooner discerned an action or opening of the enemy, than all the parts which are to act, display themselves to oppose or attack him, as if they depended on the eye. To be convinced of this truth you need only reflect on the manner of reading, in which, as soon as the eye has discerned the words, the pronouncing of them follows as quick as in a studied discourse, the eye and tongue

being so disposed by custom, as to do it without any intermediate reflection. Indeed, before we could arrive at this point the understanding and the will are necessary, which, having been united for a certain time, have communicated such a habit to these parts, as to make them act, as it were of themselves.

In order to acquire this quality in fencing, it is necessary that the master, in his lessons, should shew what opportunities are to be favourably laid hold of, demonstrating that the adversary cannot do two opposite actions at one and the same time. That whilst he is uncovering some part of his body, he cannot, at the same instant, parry, because, by the parade it must be covered; so that by enabling the scholars to make their thrusts, and other motions by the discernment of the eye, they find themselves, by practice, ready to oppose all the motions

of their antagonist without the assistance of the will. This method is, indeed, a little tedious in the beginning, but it becomes afterwards much shorter and more certain. To illustrate the subject as clearly as possible without foil in hand, let us suppose that we are on guard together. Now if you disengage without thrusting, you must *discern* which parade I take; if you *perceive* me use the simple parade, either of carte or tierce, you must disengage again accordingly. If I take a counter parade, you must double twice; if I use prime, you must pass under my wrist, &c. discerning or watching the motion of my foil, and to change as the occasion offers.

CHAP. IV.

On Left-Handed Fencers.

IT sometimes happens that a fencer will meet with a left-handed one, who, perhaps, has not learnt half so long as himself, yet the left-handed one will have the advantage of the right-handed, supposing both to be of equal courage, and taught by masters of equal abilities. This circumstance appears to the young practitioner as very *extraordinary*, and he thence concludes that the left-handed fencer has *naturally* the superiority over him; whereas, if he reflected properly he would find that a *left-handed* man has only the advantage by the *habit* of practising continually with right-handed men, and that, on the contrary, the right-handed man seldom or ever has met with

a left-handed one before, which is the reason of his being so much puzzled on this occasion. To prove this you have only to place two left-handed fencers together, and they will be both more embarrassed than the right with the left, and will, in general, fence in the most ridiculous manner imaginable.

The old system prescribes *rules* for the right-hand man to act *effectually* against a left-handed one; such as joining the blade always on the outside, to strike it smartly, and to disarm him, and many other fine things which he ought to do; all of which tend at least to perplex rather than instruct. There is little or no difference of execution in those cases, and it is only the *unaccustomed* situation of his body which makes it aukward at first to fix your point; all your motions are made *exactly* the same; it may, perhaps, in

general, be best to let the left-handed fencer attack, and be prepared to parry, in order to make the riposte as quick as possible under his elbow, which is the side on which you may afterwards find an opening. But all this depends entirely on circumstances, and on the different manner of the adversary, because left-handed men (as well as right-handed ones) have not always the same regular mode of attack and defence.

However, for those who wish to become complete finished amateurs, the best remedy for this inconvenience of not being surprised or baffled with left-handed men, is for the master (after the scholar is a little expert) to give him, sometimes, his lessons with the left-hand, and also that the scholar should practice frequently with both arms alternately; an easy and familiar method of acquiring an equal use of both

arms in fencing is the frequent practice of *carte and tierce*, and *thrusting and parrying at all-feints*. Even when *alone* you may render the left hand very familiar by forming the positions of the parades, the motions of the feints and longeing according to the positions of *carte and tierce*, against a wall. Because it is the proper command of the parts alone that is wanting to enable you to act in any situation you may find yourself in. The parades, thrusts, motions, &c. and the method of *deceiving* (the soul of fencing) is equally the same in both cases.

CHAP. V.

On the German, Spanish, and Italian Methods of Fencing.

THESE nations have their different methods of practising the small sword, but in the knowledge of the *theory* of Fencing they have always, and with truth, been considered by connoiseurs much inferior to the French, though the latter have left much to improve upon. It is, I think, unnecessary to mention their different modes of play, as they relate chiefly to mere *positions*, and are for the most part very unnatural. A good scientific fencer can very easily hit them, although they (the Italians and Spanish especially) use much longer swords than ours.

There are also many *rules* given in books to defend yourself against these foreign modes of fencing, as well as against the sword and dagger, sword and lantern, sword and cloak, &c. which were formerly used by them; all of which *rules* are completely impracticable. There are no *stated or invariable rules* for defence, except that of judgement, and *that* can only be directed as circumstances offer, assisted by oral instruction and reflection, as I hope I have sufficiently shewn the reader when treating upon the assault.

CHAP. VI.

Observations on graceful *Fencing*.

TO fence gracefully is in general understood to consist in performing all the motions according to the received and established *positions* of Fencing, without deviating in the least from them, and by many it is imagined, that if you happen, while fencing, to depart in the least from any of these regular positions, that you cannot be a *good* fencer. For instance, I have frequently heard it remarked, when two persons have been fencing together, if one has thrust and touched the other without straightening his left knee, "How "*badly* that man fenced, he neglected "to straighten his left knee!" or that

he " longed without letting fall his left " arm," &c. And very often when these kind of fencers are well beaten, they console themselves with the reflection that " the adversary was not half so *graceful* as " himself."

But unfortunately these *graceful fencers* wonderfully deceive themselves, as they confound grace with buffoonery. All those affected attitudes, which are impossible to be expressed, but which in the eyes of the judicious have a most absurd appearance, have nothing to do with, and are in fact a great detriment to the *science* itself: perhaps, however, it may do for *stage fencing*, which requires nothing else but studied positions. Every rational person knows, that to appear affected, in what we really know, is no great commendation; but to affect what we *do not* know is downright folly. Now, for the most part, those

who affect these "*graces*" are the greatest novices in the art of fencing that can be conceived; and after all, when these "*graceful*" fencers meet with one whose touches come frequently on their bodies, they are so flurried and confounded, that their gracefulness becomes complete *ploughman like* fencing, so that you perceive nothing but a thorough "*ferraillement.*" Thus much for graceful fencing. I am far, however, from wishing to depreciate *elegant* fencing. Every one should endeavour to attend as much as possible to the positions; not those contrary to nature, but those which have a natural tendency to the execution of your *intentions* with effect, and according to the true science of fencing, and nothing more. A man cannot be called an *inelegant* fencer if, in the heat of the assault, his imagination has premeditated a counter action to the adversary's intention; and in executing the same he,

by chance, neglected, for instance, the " straightening his left knee," or to let fall his left arm, &c. These are little negligencies which must necessarily happen very often to those who fence with *judgement*. To effect all those absurd airs alluded to must unavoidably prevent your executions from being *scientific*. They are like extraneous trappings which encumber the more *useful* motions of the body.

Observe, I do not recommend a total disregard to *appearances*; a *natural*, animated, and vigorous appearance, according to the *true* principles of the art, without any ridiculous additions, is what every one should endeavour to possess. In carte and tierce, undoubtedly, you should attend strictly to the *natural* and true positions, because they are according to the necessary foundation from whence proceed the proper executions of the different motions

in the assault; and, if attended to in a proper manner, will display as elegant and graceful an appearance as any sensible person would wish, and conduces also to render all other exercises of the body equally elegant, precise, firm, and just; such as riding, skaiting, dancing, walking, &c. In fact, fencing, according to its true principles, is the most elegant accomplishment known; but if it deviates into harlequinade buffoonery, it becomes the most absurd and contemptible distortion of the body imaginable. It is the same with good acting and bad acting, the effect of which every judicious person is sensible of.

CHAP. VII.

On the Broad-sword.

AS many persons imagine that the knowledge of the broad-sword is of greater advantage, and of course much superior to that of the *small-sword*, I think those who affirm this are but little acquainted with the *proper* use of either weapon.—Upon this subject, therefore, I beg to offer a few short remarks.

Some, indeed, say that the science of both weapons is quite different. If they mean with regard to the *theory*, it is undoubtedly true that the *small-sword* is by far superior; but if they mean with regard to its *practical* part, they surely must know

that it only consists in making all the motions of the feints and parades *wide*, instead of *small*, and instead of *pointing*, to *cut*. If, indeed, they mean that it is superior as an *amusement*, I have nothing to say to it, as every one must be left to their own taste in those respects. I wish to be understood as giving my humble opinion chiefly with regard to its *utility*, I mean against one who has a small-sword in single combat. Now, if the difference between the *wide* motion of the cut, and that of the small one of the thrust, be clearly understood, it only remains to shew which motion is of most advantage. I think there will require little demonstration to an *impartial* and somewhat experienced amateur of the sword, to prove that to make a *small* motion is of much less danger than making a *large* or wide one. To render this explanation as clear as possible without foil in hand, let us suppose that we are on guard

together, you with a broad-sword, and myself with a small-sword, both of equal courage, and well perfected in each respective science; now it is certain, that to cut me effectually you must *raise* your wrist, and consequently make a *wide* motion, which I shall *not*, as is frequently supposed, always attempt to *parry*. On the contrary, I shall, in the *interval* of the time you must take to make your cut, deliver in a *time thrust* (being a very small motion) at your body, so that *before* your cut arrives at my head, or elsewhere, you will most probably have my sword through your body. To this observation some people reply, that "although this may sometimes "be the case, yet the cut will *finally* come "on my head." This, however, is a mistake, because at the time of raising your wrist to cut, you will certainly *perceive* my point coming quick towards your body, and your surprise would be such that your

premeditated cut will, or at least is *likely*, to stop in the middle of your motion while raising your wrist, or you will immediately endeavour to return to a necessary parade, seeing yourself in such imminent danger. Although this opportunity may not occur at the *first* motion you make to attack, an experienced fencer knows how to evade your motions, and to take the most favourable moment (which must frequently happen) to do it effectually; moreover, he can, by reason of his knowledge of the distance, the numberless feints, and the continual *wide* motions that the adversary must at all times make, *compel* him to fall into your premeditated snare, and of course you will be able to execute your intended thrust accordingly. It is a weak argument to say in reply, as some do, that the broad-swordsman will be prepared to receive your time thrust, and will parry so hard as to send your blade at a great distance from the line,

and then deliver his cut. A good scientific fencer knows all these *artifices* (and many more of greater merit, which the science of the broad-sword cannot admit of) and can easily deceive these hard parades, which also are made *wide*. In fact, there are numberless opportunities given by the motions of the broad-sword which will enable you very often to deliver an effectual time thrust, or such like, without the least danger to yourself.

Many have remarked, that to act in this advantageous manner requires a length of time for a fencer to attain, and that you may *sooner* know how to use the broad-sword effectually than the small; all this is also a mistake. I know by much experience, that if a man attends to the true science of the small-sword alone, he will thoroughly beat the broad-swordsman, although he may have learnt, or practised it

at least three times as long as the other has fencing, provided also that the broad-swordsman has no knowledge of the foil. On the contrary, if a man understands the small-sword properly, he may in a very short time acquire a complete knowledge of the other weapon, because the *theory* of the small-sword being greatly superior to the theory of the broad-sword, and the difference in the practical part consisting only of *wide* motions, &c. you may make these after a very little practice, as precise and certain as if you had practised nothing else; especially when it is considered that to make a *wide* motion properly is very easy after having practised *small* ones; but on the contrary, it is not so easy to make a small motion after having been habituated to wide ones, and which also require much longer time to do them well, if you have not previously commenced by *small* ones. Hence the propriety of learn-

ing the small-sword previously to the broad, which by not attending to it, is the reason that when playing the broad-sword, those who have began by Fencing are almost sure to beat the other who never held any thing else but a broad-sword.

CHAP. VIII.

On the straight Cut and Thrust Sword combined.

I HAVE to observe that with regard to the *utility* of the broad-sword, I have reflected much, and I do not perceive that it can be really very useful of itself, but by a *combination* with the thrust; from which the following idea may be suggested: That if a man thoroughly understands the proper *theory* of fencing, he may, in *serious* affairs, so combine the practical motions of each weapon, as by an union of the powers of each (the cut and thrust) he may defend and attack with more effect than by adopting the motion of one weapon alone, and to use the same as the occasion

offers; from whence it also follows that the *straight cut and thrust sword* is by far preferable to the curb broad-sword, or simple point, or any kind of sword blade. Upon this consideration I would take the liberty of recommending that all officers in the army or navy, on foot or on horseback, should never wear any other kind of sword than that above-mentioned; at the same time observing that they should be as light as possible, *i. e.* proportioned to the strength of the wearer. Those generally worn are much too heavy and unweildy, and totally unfit for the purpose intended.

From what has been said on this subject, it may be asked, " Why not teach the practice of both weapons in the fencing lessons?" To this I answer, " That, provided the pupil is taught the principles of the Art of Fencing alone, and that he can practise the same properly, the motion

of the cut is very soon acquired—in two or three lessons." But, after all, I have every reason to believe that in single combat you would very seldom have occasion to cut when there are such numberless opportunities of thrusting; and, I am almost certain that, admitting two men were to meet to fight with *straight cut and thrust swords*, both of equal courage and of equal and perfect knowledge of the Art of Fencing, you would see that there would scarcely be made one cut, especially when it is considered that one's life is at stake, in which case a man would not, for the sake of giving a *cut*, risk being thrust through the body.

There is this to be considered with regard to the utility of knowing how to cut, which is that, in the field of battle (close quarters) and more especially when boarding of ships, you may frequently have oc-

casion for both cut and thrust, and in this case it would be of the greatest service. I address this remark to captains and commanders of ships; they might benefit much by introducing this kind of sword defence amongst the company. *(See introduction).*

In another respect, the only advantage of being able to cut *judiciously* is, that if it happened in a duel, or otherwise you had to do with a man whom you know to be much inferior to yourself in point of skill, you may not wish to kill him on the spot, and that it would be sufficient to make a little incision on him in order to quiet him. But I would not, on any account, advise you, in single combat, to attempt to *cut* your enemy if you suppose him to possess a complete knowledge of fencing, as you would be in a perilous situation.

There is this advantage attending the learning and practice of the small-sword alone, and that is, if done according to its proper science, you are not liable to any of those unpleasant hits on the different parts of the body, which in the broad-sword play you must unavoidably expect, and do frequently receive, very often rendering the arm, legs, &c. at least black and blue, setting aside frequent serious accidents, by reason of a (perhaps unintended) hard blow, occasioning thereby the adversary to lose his temper, and in consequence both act as if they, in reality, were the bitterest enemies, striking each other with all the violence imaginable, which unfortunately can be often done by evil-minded persons, without an *appearance* on either side of an *intended* hurt, by reason of the *apparent* necessity of a wide motion being necessarily *hard*, if done quick, to which there cannot be made, with propriety, any

remonstrance, on account of the *supposition* that the science necessarily admits of it, and the adversary cannot be expected to avoid hitting in that violent manner. I have very seldom seen the broad-sword played, but that, after a few of these (perhaps, in reality, unintentionally) hard hits, both lose all temper, and act in the dangerous manner already described.

Now in the practice of Fencing alone nothing of this violence happens, the touch is only made on the body, and that lightly; and if a man happens to have the indiscretion to lose his temper, in consequence of being touched rather oftener than he likes, still he must touch at the breast only (it not being counted elsewhere); if therefore his play becomes in the least violent, it is immediately perceived, and if it becomes *furious*, you are sure to receive unpleasant hits on other parts of the

body, which is a sufficient excuse to leave off, as by such a mode he totally departs from the science, risking the wounding of you for life, the foils being very liable to break in such kind of precipitate rashness. *(See Hints to those who fence contrary to the Science.)*

To practise the motions of both broad and small swords combined, in a pleasing and interesting manner, there is no substitute for the cut and thrust sword; and admitting there were, it would be of no *essential* service, because, as I have said before, the motion of the cut will be rendered very familiar, precise, and effectual, after two or three lessons, in the usual way of the Highland broad-sword, for it is only this one unaccustomed motion (the cut) that is wanting, in order to render it precise and familiar; it might also be now and then gently practised with the master with

the usual sticks and baskets, and sometimes with an arm cushion.

If the above observations are weighed fairly by a person a little acquainted with these matters, I am confident he will find them at least worth attending to, and I flatter myself he will not hesitate to affirm that the knowledge of the small-sword, even *alone*, (without the cut) will enable a man on any emergency, and against any kind of sword, to defend himself with the greatest advantage; it is therefore superior to any other kind of self-defence.

CHAP. IX.

Of the principal Faculties necessary in Fencing scientifically.

FROM what has been already said on the subject of the art of fencing, it will appear, that to attain a complete knowledge of it, *five faculties* are the chief requisites, viz. judgement, quickness, precision, discernment, and feeling of the blade.

Although some of these seem to depend entirely on *nature*, yet it is not *wholly* so. It has been found that those who imagined they did not naturally possess *all* of them, have, nevertheless, by dint of practice and a proper theory, attained them to the utmost perfection. It is a mistake to suppose, that if you do not possess *uncommon*

quickness in making the different motions, quick sight, &c. that you cannot become an expert fencer. Any one who possesses their *ordinary* faculties can, with due application and attention, equal any other person.

In order, therefore, to render these essential requisites in fencing still more plain, we will briefly recapitulate them in their proper order:—

1st. *Judgement* consists in determining instantly, after your offensive motions are made, what is necessary for your defensive one's, and *vice versa*; also to foresee the designs which your adversary wishes to execute, and to distinguish the occasions in which it would be most advantageous to attack or defend. The knowledge of all rules, of the greatest extant, cannot supply the deficiency of *judgement*. I leave you, there-

fore to conceive its power, and you will perceive that it is the soul of fencing.

2d. *Quickness.* Although a man may possess much judgement in fencing, if he is totally void of a natural quickness to execute the dictates of his judgement, he will oftentimes fail; and to acquire the necessary quickness depends in a great measure on practice.

3d. *Precision.* This consists in determining with justness to execute all the necessary motions, &c. to defend and attack without confusion, or entangling in each others blades, which would be the case if quickness were used without *precision,* which is limiting the time of your motions to those of your antagonist's, so that in deceiving his motions you do not use your quickness before its proper time. To understand this well (*See Feints.*)

4th. *Discernment.* That is, to *perceive*, to *discover*, to *watch* the motions of your adversary's *wrist*, in order that, when you *find* an opening, you should be immediately prepared to execute what is necessary. This is more fully explained under the head of "*Good Effects of a nice Discernment of the Sight.*"

5th. *Feeling the Blade.* The necessity of *feeling* the blade in fencing is of great importance, it serves to know in what situation you are in with your adversary; and is nothing more than having your blade joined to his. While you are in this situation, even without looking, you may judge whether you are covered or not, or whether he is inside or outside of your arm; if he presses your blade, or if he advances his sword by an extension of the arm, &c. Now to attack you in these situations he must *quit* your blade, which you cannot only

feel but *perceive*, and are consequently ready to form a necessary parade according to your *judgement*. The reason that this essential quality is so frequently disregarded is, in consequence of the too great force and tightness with which the foil is continually held in the hand, especially by young practitioners.

Now, as the above five qualities depend on each other, if they are properly considered and appreciated, it will be granted, that by omitting them you are very far from attaining *perfection*, although you may have mechanically practised fencing all your life time. But, on the contrary, with these faculties properly combined, you are, generally speaking, sure to conquer either with sword or foil in hand.

CHAP. X.

Remarks on those who fence contrary to the Science commonly called "Ferrailleurs."

THERE are some kind of persons who call themselves *fencers*, who, when they pretend to fence with any one, more especially with a stranger, will render their mode of play not only very disagreeable, but really so very *dangerous*, that by means of this unfair and ungentlemanlike fencing, termed in French *Ferrailler*, will, perhaps, gain the advantage of their adversary, who, perhaps, never having seen such kind of fencing, and who, on such unpleasant occasions will, in consequence, appear in the eyes of some of the spectators, who may be totally ignorant of the art, as mere novices

in fencing. These persons alluded to will twist and turn their bodies in numberless harlequinade forms, when they attack and defend; and after delivering a harsh, precipitate thrust, will recover, and *politely* present their backs as quick as possible to the adversary, in order to receive on that place the riposte, &c. or they will let their bodies fall so low on the delivery of the longe, that you would imagine they were paying homage to the adversary's toe; so that by these, and numerous other *elegant motions*, they will often prevent the adversary's being able to hit or aim at the breast, which is the only place where the touches are *counted* in fencing. But this is not all—the worst and most dangerous part of their play is their *ferocious* mode of attack, by drawing in the arm, and plunging violently at you, so that, if you miss your parade, you will receive a thrust which might greatly injure you, perhaps for life. They

do not care *where* they hit, provided they can *intimidate* their adversary; and if, unfortunately, the foil should break at the time of thrusting, it is highly probable but that one of the parties would be severely wounded. Sometimes these kind of "*ferrailleurs*" keep by them a set of foils, called "*chasse coquins*," which are very stiff, like pokers; these they have by them, on purpose to fence with *strangers*, no matter *whom*; and if it happens that they meet with those who are indiscreet enough to fence with them, the consequence is, that the thrust, in the above violent manner, will be so hard and dangerous, that the *unreflecting* young amateur is *intimidated*, he knows not how; consequently he is prevented from fencing in his usual manner, and is perhaps beaten, which otherwise might not have happened, if he had made use of his *judgement*. In reply to the above remarks, many, who are un-

acquainted with the art, say, that " it is " very natural, when you fence with a " stranger, and especially for your reputa- " tion, &c. *to do whatever you can to avoid* " *being beaten.*" *That*, indeed, is very true; but do you by this mode of *fencing* (if it is to be called so) avoid being touched in the *back*, or other parts of the body, in the line of the breast; or do you imagine that because you avoid being touched within the *oval*, where the touches are *only* counted good, that you are consequently the *best* fencer?

Before I proceed further on the subject, it is necessary to comprehend that, with *foil in hand*, the intention of marking that part of the body only, namely the *right breast*, to be aimed at, and to be counted, is that the art should, without at all preventing its progress, be rendered as pleasing and as *safe* as possible, which would not be the

case where this regulation unattended to; for if a hit at *any part* of the body was to be counted as good in fencing, the art would become quite in disuse, as no one would practise it (especially as an amusement) if attended at every longe with the danger of being injured for life. Hence it was thought very necessary, not only for the sake of its improvement, but to render Fencing perfectly *safe*, to mark a particular part of the body (the breast) which should *only* be aimed at, and that all hits which happened to be made *without* that stated place, was always counted bad; and, moreover, it was always deemed proper (between *polite* fencers) to *apologise* for such an unpleasant accident. Is it then because these *ferrailleurs* depart from this established and *necessary* custom, that the touch they receive in the back or otherwise (in consequence of their ridiculous turnings of the body) should not be count-

ed? I think if these persons had their senses, they would not, with sword in hand, act in this manner. They must know, that on *such occasions* the touches *must* count *effectually*.

It is therefore clear, that to *fence* in this manner, wherein it is understood that you represent exactly the way by which you would defend your life, sword in hand, is contrary to all manner of reason. Indeed, a man must be an ideot to call this *fencing*;—since, in a serious affair, he would, by such conduct, rush headlong on his own destruction. I hope it will not be suspected that I here allude to any one in particular; I declare that it is far from my intention. My sole wish is to point out the true science, so that, sword or foil in hand, you should act equally on the *same principles*; and especially I wish these remarks to be well comprehended by young

amateurs in general. These are very apt, when they fence with one another, out of sight of the master, to disregard all their instructions, and for the sake of merely hitting each other, no matter how or where, not only to spoil their fencing, and contract bad habits, but they are also very liable to injure themselves seriously. Is it imagined that by acting in this furious manner, it shews *courage?* It is only a temerity *foil in hand*, to endeavour to *intimidate* your adversary, by which you expect to hit oftener than by the proper mild method. And if unfortunately you are both equally rash, the danger is extremely great, not only by the reciprocal *hard* thrusts received, but by the almost certainty of the foils breaking; the serious consequences of which every one who knows what this kind of fencing is, must be convinced of. Instances of the most serious kind have frequently happened between rash, heedless,

ignorant fencers, who, if they were to see the point of a sword, would probably tremble like a leaf. And if it is intended to hurt one another, why not take the *swords* at once?

As there are, however, many opinions on this subject, as well as on most others in Fencing, it may be proper to treat on the principal ones, under the head of *Erroneous Opinions*.—See next Chapter.

CHAP. XI.

On Erroneous Opinions.

1st. WE will begin by those who imagine that with *sword in hand* against an able man there is nothing to be done but to act in the manner above described, namely, to rush and plunge violently, and to intimidate the adversary. Perhaps this mode of acting may succeed against a man who is not well formed, or has not the proper courage and resolution that is necessary, but if he possesses enough to keep up his spirits, without being flurried, and is firm on his legs, this mode of attack will be of great advantage to him, because it cannot be done without giving him many an opportunity of getting the better, and be-

sides I have every reason to believe that the greatest part of those who talk in this manner would hardly attempt it with an *able* man. It may certainly be said that people have often fought in this manner with success, but as there is a great difference in persons, what succeeds with them against unskilful people, would have been very dangerous against other men.

2d. I have met with persons who were weak enough to believe that a knowledge in fencing takes away the heart, saying that as there are such a number of modes of deceiving and counteracting their parades, thrusts, &c. they have consequently an idea of evident danger, which dissipates their courage, and causing a disagreeable apprehension hinders them from their enterprize, when an unskilful person blindly undertakes every thing. It is true there is great folly in this way of acting, and still

more in their imagining that an able man dares not undertake or venture when the appearance of success leads him to it, and that an ignorant one should attempt every thing when his loss is almost certain. Is it reasonable to suppose that a man of natural courage should lose it, because he is assured that he is more expert than his enemy, over whom, or perhaps his equals, he always had the better in the assaults, by the help of that knowledge and dexterity? This, far from intimidating, seems to assure him of the success, which is due to his habitual practice; whilst, on the contrary, an aukward man sees, by his disadvantage in assaults, that he has no room for hope in combat, as the dexterous man possesses the qualities which procure success; and others, with as little reason, leave all to chance, but the very name is sufficient to shew that it is not to be relied on.

3d. Some are of opinion that a man may naturally know enough to attack and defend himself without the assistance of art; but man, though the only reasonable creature, finds himself deprived of what irrational creatures naturally possess; and consequently requires for his improvement the assistance and practice of others. The grand art of war, and that of using the sword, which has been practised through so many ages, is still susceptible of new inventions, and it may be said that as there is no place, however situated by nature, but requires art to secure its defence, so likewise whatever disposition a man may possess, he cannot be perfect without the assistance of art and practice.

4th. Some acknowledge that skill is necessary in single combat, but that in a crowd or battle it is altogether useless. I

own that on these occasions, it is less useful than in single battle, on account of the different accidents attending cannon, musquets, and of other arms; besides, a man may be attacked by several at once. But if he cannot avoid being hit by a ball, and sometimes with a sword, he may, nevertheless, by his skill and courage, more easily defend and offend, besides being both able to *cut and thrust*, he may put more enemies to flight, or keep them at a greater distance. Here I must beg leave to state the opinion of M. L'Abbat (a former writer on Fencing) which is this "That "if the French troops have mostly been "victorious, *sword or bayonet in hand (close "quarters)* a great part of the glory is "owing to the skill of several officers and "soldiers, in consequence of having a "fencing master attached to each respec-"tive regiment." Although this may like-

wise appear, and certainly is, an encomium on Mons. A.'s nation, yet I will venture to assert, that if the English military where as expert in fencing as they should be, you might see, as well on foot as on horseback, and boarding of ships, actions which would not be only uncommon but prodigious, owing to the natural, cool, and steady intrepidity of the English. After all, I think it must be agreed that a man who wears a sword, without knowing how to use it, runs as great a hazard, and is full as ridiculous, as a man who carries books about with him without knowing how to read.

5th. Others say, that if they had to do with an expert man, they would not give him time to put himself on guard, as if he who understands the real science of Fencing were not always *on guard*, having more knowledge, and being better dis-

posed not only to place himself at once, by the habit that all his parts have contracted, but also to avoid being surprised, and be able to surprise by the knowledge he has of *time* and *distance*. On the contrary, an unskilful person being ignorant of both, is easily caught; besides that the parts of his body being unaccustomed to place themselves regularly, or at once, must always be in a continual unsteady motion, vainly seeking their proper place, by which they continually leave themselves open to receive the *time thrust*, and would also lose it were it given them.

6th. Some men will tell you that they know enough to serve their turn. Those who use this expression, as well as those I have spoken of before, sufficiently shew that they have learnt but little or nothing. In truth, it is no hard matter to judge of the different degrees of abilities, so that, when

a person finds himself an inferior, he cannot properly say that he knows enough to serve his turn; and a man who is superior knows very well that he is not perfect; and that if his good disposition, together with his long practice, has brought him very forward in the art, others may know as much as he, and that therefore he is not so perfect as an unskilful person may imagine.

7th. Others will say, that if they know how to "*be on guard*," 'tis sufficient.—They are in the right, if it be according to the principles laid down under that head: but this is not their meaning, as they think that it is only the placing themselves on the *position*, which is useless, without freedom, vigour, and *judgement especially*, to manage them. These are qualities which, when accompanied with a certain confidence, ease, and good appearance, shew, in a great measure, as soon as

a man takes a sword or foil in his hand, to what degree of perfection he is arrived.

8th. I have heard several people say, that they did not care to be dexterous, provided they knew how to defend themselves, and to thrust and parry well; and really they are right, supposing they could do that without practising what the most able men have invented and studied on the occasion.

9th. Many people say, that with sword in hand, the lessons of the master are not observed, and that it is sufficient to have courage. It is certain that people, who are subject to this error, are not capable of following the art, which is to be acquired only by putting a good theory in practice, which by frequent use disposes the eye and the parts so well, that it is almost impossible to act otherwise. And

as to the *practice* of the foil, and of the sword, it is equally the same; for no one ought to do any thing with the foil, but what he knows by experience to be without risk, according to the science. In some cases, it is true, what is esteemed good is not so in another; for example, thrusts with the foil are good only on the breast; but with the sword they are good every where.

10th. Some people imagine that a man, who has no knowledge of the art of the sword, will frequently have the advantage over those who have had much practice and instruction; but those who talk in this manner should reflect, that there are many men who, possessing the greatest abilities, are very apt, at the sight of their adversaries, to be so transported with rage and indignation against them, that, by their fury, they lose all recollection of their art, and rush

head-long on their own destruction, because, being in a passion, they are not master of them themselves; and if the adversary is only cautious and cool, the passionate man will inevitably fall on the other's sword.

If a man intends that his art should be of use to him, which, upon such occasions, he has most need of, his *judgement* must go along with it, otherwise his art is of no service to him.

I think this is sufficient to convince any rational person, that it is an advantage (and no small one) to possess an art, if he has sense enough to know how to make use of it. But for those who undervalue it, although they can give no reason for it, and who will not be convinced of its service, I wish that one day, to their sad experience and cost, they may not be forced by their

ignorance, when it will be too late to help it, to acknowledge its usefulness.

11th. Others say, that it is needless to learn when the disposition is wanting, which is an error; for a body that is well disposed by nature, can in some measure better dispense with the want of improvement than those that she has taken less care of; these requiring a constant labour to acquire what the others have almost of themselves; and though they cannot arrive so soon to a perfect suppleness, activity, and precision, yet their bodies by practice will be better disposed to act, and consequently not so much in danger.

Secret Thrust.

12th. I think it proper to finish the subject of *Erroneous Opinions*, by confuting an error as common, and more ridiculous than

all the others, which is that of an *infallible thrust*; which a great many persons think that masters reserve for dangerous occasions, or to sell it at a dear rate. This wonderful thing is called a *secret thrust*. I do not know whether this error proceeded from those who have not learned, or from the chimera of some self-conceited masters, who have sold to ignorant scholars some thrusts as infallible, of their own contrivance, as ridiculous and dangerous as the simplicity of the scholar and the knavery of the master are great.

All the secrets in the thrusts that are given by an able man, far from being an effect of the thrust, is only an effect of the occasion, or rather of the *judgement*; by means of this quality all thrusts are secret ones, or they would be worth nothing.

I thought that after I had exposed the errors of several persons, I might take the liberty of telling them, that it is contrary to the rules of good breeding to talk of things they do not understand; that oftentimes people, by their first appearance, have been thought to possess the qualities of clever men, but have afterwards forfeited the good opinion which they had at first imposed on others.

On the Utility of learning to fence at an early Age considered at the same time as a necessary, healthy Exercise for the Sedentary of all Ages.

BEFORE I conclude these observations, I have one more to make, which regard chiefly those persons who defer letting their sons learn to fence until they have attained a certain age, growth, and strength. If these three qualities would enable them to put the *art* of using the sword into execution *immediately*, I acknowledge that they ought not to begin until they have possessed them; but it is by much experience and practice that they become perfectly *confident* of their knowledge, and are able to engage with any fencer; so that, except they begin young (from the age of fourteen for instance) the employment for

which they are designed may not give them time to arrive to that degree of perfection; besides, by beginning in a tender age, the body is more easily brought to a good air, an easy disengagement and flexibility, being more at liberty and liable to less faults, which it would probably fall into for want of being properly cultivated.

Now, admitting even that youths are not intended either for the army or navy, still, when considered as an *exercise* alone, both mental and bodily, it ought not, upon any consideration, to be dispensed with; for *fencing* is, of all exercises, the finest and healthiest (which some of our first medical men, who know what fencing is, do readily acknowledge), as it opens the chest, and for "promoting," to use the Faculty's phrase, "a mutual action of both solids and fluids, "invigorating the heart, and occasioning "an equal distribution of the blood, and

" other circulating fluids, through the " whole system." In fact, the good effects derived from the exercise of the small-sword, even for persons of *all ages*, is indisputably evident, when pursued with pleasure and with regular moderation; for a *mild regularity* in fencing is of material service for the health, as well as the improvement of the pupil.

> " Pursued *prolixly*, ev'n the gentlest toil
> " Is waste of health."—*Armstrong.*

As for the sedentary and studious, nothing can possibly be better for them than about an hour's fencing two or three times a week, this exercise being far preferable to riding, walking, &c. as *all* the parts of the body are, by this practice, *equally* in motion: indeed, the benefit arising from this exercise is only conceived by those who have learnt it in a proper manner; setting

aside its elegance as an accomplishment, as well as its serious advantage in being the means of defending yourself with confidence and certainty upon any occasion.

PROMISCUOUS ADVICE.

IT will not, perhaps, be deemed improper to introduce, by way of conclusion, the following promiscuous advice, intended chiefly for young practitioners, which they would do well to remember while fencing, but which they are, for the most part, very apt to neglect, arising either from forgetfulness or for want of knowing better:—

1. Do not put yourself on the position of the guard within the reach of your adversary's thrust, especially at the time of drawing your sword.

2. Make no wry faces or motions that are disagreeable to the sight.

3. Be not affected, negligent, nor stiff.

4. Do not flatter yourself in your lessons, and still less in your assault.

5. Be not angry at receiving a touch, but take care to avoid it.

6. Do not think yourself expert, but that you may become so.

7. Be not vain at the hits you give, nor shew contempt when you receive them.

8. Do not endeavour to give many thrusts on the longe, running the risk of receiving one in the interim.

9. When you present the foils to a stranger, give the choice without pressing.

10. If you are much inferior make no long assaults.

11. Do nothing that is useless, every motion should tend to your advantage.

12. To know what you may risk, you must know what you are worth.

13. Judge of a thrust rather by reason than by its success.

14. To parry well is of great service, but it is nothing when you can do no more.

15. Let your motions be made as much within the line of your adversary's body as possible.

16. Practice is either a good or an evil, all consists in the choice of it.

17. When you think yourself perfectly skilful and dexterous, it is certain then that you are not so.

18. It is not enough that the parts of your body agree, *i. e.* supple, firm, and vigorous; they must also answer the enemy's motions.

19. Endeavour both to discover your adversary's designs, and to conceal your own.

20. The knowledge of what is good without practising it, turns frequently to evil.

21. Two skilful men acting together, fight more with their heads than with their hands.

22. The smaller you can make your motions with the foil, the quicker will your point arrive at your adversary's body.

23. Do not take the time-thrust too frequently, unless your adversary is much your inferior, and that you are not likely to be hit at the same time.

24. If one hits the body, and the other the face, or elsewhere, at the same time, the hit on the body is counted, but not the other.

25. If in binding, parrying, or by any means, your adversary's foil falls, the thrust that is made in the interval is good, because you are not obliged to know that he *will* lose the grasp of it, but if the touch is made *after*, and that you see the foil is out of his hand, it is then unfair to reckon it.

26. Thrusts made with the foil in both hands, or

by shifting it from one into the other, are very improper.

27. If your adversary drops his foil by accident or in consequence of a smart parade of your's, you should immediately pick it up and present it to him politely.

28. Never attempt to hit your adversary while thrusting Carte-and-tierce, unless by mutual agreement.

29. Be sure, at no time, while fencing with an able man, to attempt to volte, disarm,* &c. These are ridiculous things, only taught by the ignorant, and often attended with danger.

30. Never deny a hit.

31. Do not laugh, or shew any intent to ridicule another's manner of taking his lessons, or of making assault.

32. It is a proper civility in Carte-and-tierce to ask the adversary to thrust first.

33. Never make use of the left arm, nor turn your

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* There are some Fencing-masters who *say* they can disarm *any* man. I should like to know which is the greatest, the imposition and quackery of such a master, or the simplicity of those who believe him.

back on the delivery of a thrust to avoid being hit on the body, (*i. e.* on the breast.)

34. It is improper to take the distance when you are on guard to make assault.

35. It is wrong, and very ungentlemanly, to deliliver a second hit while on the longe, if you are *certain* that you had hit on the first attempt; yet it does not follow that you are not to return a second, or even a third thrust on the longe, if you really think you had not fairly hit the breast on the first delivery of your thrust; for it frequently happens, that in the heat of the assault, you might not have felt that you had hit the first time, consequently, if you happen to hit twice or thrice with repeated quickness on the longe, and you are told of it, it is polite and just to beg pardon for those repeated hits. But, observe again, you are not to be expected to lose the opportunity of delivering a second hit, through the fear of having hit by the first thrust; however, if the adversary *immediately* mentions that he is touched, undoubtedly you must then immediately stop.

36. Always join blades (if possible) previously to another attack; that is, after a hit is made.

37. Draw not your sword but to serve the King, preserve your honour, or to defend your life.

There are one or two more things to mention,

which some persons may think very trivial, but as I know of serious consequences having resulted from disregarding them, I shall I hope be excused if I insert them for the benefit of young inexperienced fencers, viz.

Be careful never to make assault, nor to thrust or parry at all-feints, without having the *mask* on.—Many and very *serious* accidents have happened through neglect of this; for, although you may imagine, and perhaps be certain in your thrusting, of fixing your point straight to your adversary's breast, nevertheless he may, even if he is clever, parry carelessly, and by that means bring your point to his face.

It is very improper to hit, even in play, any person who has not a foil in his hand, whether he is or is not aware of your thrust, for he might, as in the latter caution, raise his arm in order to parry, and bring your point to his face. The loss of an eye, or some such injury, is very likely to happen by playing in such a careless and hazardous way.

Those who intend to make assault until they are in a perspiration, would do well to put on a flannel waistcoat next the skin, as, after such an exercise, they will find great comfort in putting on their clothes, and will thereby feel amazingly refreshed, similar to coming out of a bath; it is likewise risking the catching of a cold to fence long with

linen next the skin, unless you change immediately afterwards.

I must here take notice of a strange question which I had almost forgotten to mention, but it being again lately made to me, I shall take this opportunity of saying a few words on the subject. The question alluded to is simply this, (when speaking of another fencer,) "Can he touch you?" by which is meant, in reality, that if a man can touch you, *one* out of a dozen that you are able to hit him, that, *therefore*, you cannot be a capital fencer; for, say they, you ought to prevent being hit at *all times*. When these persons (who, in general, know nothing of fencing) are answered that it is utterly impossible to be *certain* of preventing being hit *once*, or even *twice*, during an assault consisting of twelve hits, they seem quite *astonished*, and think it either *wonderful*, or that you are not a complete fencer, and especially if the person, of whom they are speaking, is not considered much of a fencer, nor even to have never learnt. But the most proper question to be considered is this—"Which of the two adversaries "will be sure of making the *greatest number* of hits "during the assault for a stated number? (twelve, for "instance)."

Now if one hits *twelve* before the other hits *eight*,

the conqueror may assuredly (even between good fencers) consider himself by far superior to his adversary, who can never (upon an average) hit him more than *eight*. And if a man can hit, at all times, *twelve* to *six*, he surely may consider himself, in the same proportion, as possessing *double* the dexterity of the adversary. At the same rate, therefore, is one superior to the other, according to the number of hits made by the respective persons.

Hence we may naturally conclude, that if a man hits another, upon an average, *two* to *one*, the inferior party must pay great attention, and practise much, to arrive to even *two-thirds* of the other's ability, (if both parties are of equal courage, and under the same kind of instructions).

A man, therefore, cannot be called a *capital fencer*, that is, among the first class of amateurs, if he cannot, upon an average, hit nine to twelve with any one that he engages.

When this subject is properly considered, how very inferior a man must be looked upon if he cannot hit *three* or *four* in twelve. Such a fencer cannot surely be compared to one who can be sure of hitting at the rate of three or four to one.

I hope what has been said is sufficient to shew the absurdity of asking such a question as "Can he touch "you?" for no one, even the best fencer in the world,

can be sure to prevent a *chance* hit (for one or two hits in twelve can only be looked upon as such).

Perhaps, I may be again told that, "*Sword in hand* you ought to prevent a *chance* hit;" which is very true in some respects, but it must be remembered that, *sword in hand*, it is only *one* hit that, in general, *suffices*, and that the *chance* of making that hit the *first* is not so likely to be in favour of an inferior adversary who has always had the disadvantage in the fencing assaults, and, of course, the superior adversary is still more cautious how he exposes himself in a serious affair; whereas, in the fencing assault, the *number* of hits agreed upon by the respective parties, and the *time* occupied to make them, may give a *chance* to the inferior one of putting in *one*, or perhaps *two*, hits during an assault of twelve hits.

It is sufficient to observe, once for all, that if a man can hit another upon an average *two* to *one*, palpably by a proper and fair mode of fencing, he must be considered as possessing double the ability of his adversary. Understand, at the same time, that both parties must have acquired the right way of using their swords; for if they fence (if it must be called *fencing*), without understanding even the positions, much less the *science* itself, they will then touch each other, at all times, by mere *chance*, consequently, if one touches the other most at one assault (both of equal courage) the other is as likely to be the conqueror the next time they meet, for every sensible

person will agree that the very name of *chance* is sufficient to shew that it is not to be depended upon at any time, and the great danger attending such bungling fencing has been already noticed.

FINIS.

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